

Radical Hospitality: Welcoming Refugees to Leeds

Progressive Christianity Network

Presentations offered at the Arthur Long event

The Liberal Christian

Herald

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December 2017 - No 91**

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Thanks are to be given to Adrian Long, who has kindly served as Guest Editor in recent editions of the ***The Liberal Christian Herald***. It is my pleasure to join the ranks of other UCA members who have ensured that this journal reflects the great diversity of beliefs and practices that make the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches such a stimulating and engaging forum in which to express our faith. We wish Adrian well in his many activities and commitments, and look forward to future contributions in these pages.

I had the opportunity in February of this year to visit the German city of Wittenberg. What prompted me to explore this particular place in the course of my ministerial sabbatical were the celebrations taking place this year to mark the 500th anniversary of the start of the Reformation. Legend has it that a young Augustinian monk, called Martin Luther, nailed his 95 theses on the proposed reforms that were needed to the Roman Catholic Church of his day to the door of the palace church in that university city. It was moving to visit the church where Luther was baptised, married and frequently preached, and to see first-hand the city from where the

great events of the 16th century emanated.

It is inspiring to note that the commemorative events taking place this year globally to mark this anniversary are being offered in a spirit of mutual respect and co-operation between the numerous Protestant denominations and the Roman Catholic Church.

In defence of his position on justification by faith alone, Martin Luther famously declared that the New Testament Letter of James was the work of the devil, owing to its statement: ***'Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.'*** [James 2.17] Our cover article explores a striking example of how one community has responded in faith through actions that meet the needs of persons who find themselves requiring practical support in areas of housing, clothing, food and basic hospitality in a strange land. These themes are at the heart of the Christmas story, as it appears in Luke's and Matthew's gospels. The Christmas narrative maintains its relevance whenever faith responds to need in such a concrete and demonstrable manner. May this season of worship and celebrations hold a relevance and immediacy to all our readers.

JEFF GOULD

Radical Hospitality: welcoming refugees to Leeds

Many people who saw the image of a small boy washed up on a Mediterranean beach in 2015 will have been through the same experience of outrage, shock, horror. Alan Kurdi was about the same age as my son Samuel and so I also faced a particular familiarity with the image; the body of a boy. Despite our culture's cynical tragedy fatigue, our famine weariness, something about that image broke through. We held a service at Mill Hill to express our sorrow, our feeling of helplessness, and outrage - that once again these events could be occurring in Europe. I was one of many who joined a public meeting in Leeds organised by 'Leeds Welcomes Refugees'. The meeting was held in the West Yorkshire Playhouse, in a rehearsal room accessed via several staircases and corridors. The rehearsal room was packed and airless.

Many connections were made at that meeting which would prove important, not least my realisation that a big airy accessible chapel is a far better place to hold a public meeting than a rehearsal room in a theatre.

Some of the people who met that day contacted me and asked if I'd be amenable to hosting a smaller activist meeting of people who decided that they'd like to do something direct. This took place after service on a Sunday. The group decided to start immediately and collect enough clothes and camping equipment to drive a van load to Calais. This decision set us on a learning curve so steep it was at times like a loop the loop.

Within a week we had filled the side pews at Mill Hill with clothes, sleeping bags, tents and cooking equipment.



Contributions to the relief effort stored at Mill Hill Chapel, Leeds.

Photo by Jo James

People can be very generous. We decided to hold the chapel open as much as possible to accept donations.

After the appeal for clothing to assist Syrian refugees had been aired on local radio and press an enormous box of pork pies, ham, bacon and other products deliberately offensive to Muslims was left on our back doorstep. Thanks for that.

Although many of the donations were not as ill intentioned as that one, many weren't exactly helpful either. Some people took the opportunity to clear out their spare rooms, collections including high heels, ties and nightwear were unlikely to have much application on the refugee trail or in any of the transit camps. The period we were collecting in Chapel coincided with Heritage Open Days and it was wonderful to be able to present our chapel as a centre of action, instead of as a well kept mausoleum.

We began sorting clothes. NB it is easier to collect clothes than it is to sort them. Charities like Oxfam have whole networks of experts dedicated to this, we had a handful of volunteers and a rapidly growing pile of donations. Meanwhile the year was advancing and I had a Christening to conduct in a chapel full of used clothing. This was creating a bottle neck in the process of gathering and distributing donated items so it was decided to apply to the council for access to a property more suited to the activity in hand. Amazingly Leeds Council immediately provided a warehouse rent free for our use and the work of transporting and sorting aid began again.

There were some brilliant outcomes. we provided bedding and clothes to the first reception centre in Wakefield,

we sent van load after van load of carefully focussed and requested aid directly to the warehouse in Calais.

These were trying months; the warehouse was cold and dark, there was neither heating nor light, it was November and the activist group which had initiated the activity was fractious and fissile. Ultimately it collapsed and I was left more or less holding the baby. It was stressful - I was the leaseholder and nominated key holder for a warehouse packed more than head height with clothes, shoes, tents, stoves and paraphernalia, sackfuls of toothbrushes and crates of shampoo. Someone I spoke to at the time said that volunteer projects are like moon shots. The rocket that blasts off falls away, another vessel travels further into the unknown but its often another pod entirely that makes the last touchdown. In this case a new group appeared and propelled the project onwards, into a new space and new priorities.

A second open meeting of Leeds welcomes Refugees was scheduled to check on the progress made since the first. This time I volunteered to host it at Mill Hill - this turned out to be much more convivial than the first meeting. [I've subsequently wondered at this trajectory; like my own as an actor becoming a minister - the site of action travelled from the theatre to the chapel.]

At this meeting, with its focus on engagement and discussion, a rather wonderful idea emerged in conversation with Ed, a local politician, Harry, an English as a second language teacher, and myself. Wouldn't it be a good idea to encourage refugees arriving in Leeds to make connections with



Generous donations filling the warehouse.

Photo by Jo James

the community and learn English in an informal setting? Couldn't such a setting help to integrate a group who would surely be anxious, and ghettoised. Couldn't such a setting provide at least some protection from predators seeking to exploit the most vulnerable. The space would have to be central so people could easily find it and close to transit points like the station.

I realised that the project we'd been involved with so far had run its course. It had made some great progress, produced some great friendships, above all it had had real impact in delivering warm dry clothing, food and equipment to some of the most desolate victims of system failure in Europe.

The Yorkshire Aid project had grown up and was now merged with a new charity Refugees-Start which focussed on equipping and maintaining a first reception centre on Mykonos. I remain hugely impressed by this team that finally made our initial efforts worthwhile and if you 'd like to contribute please do look them up at <http://www.refugees-start.co.uk>

The idea of a conversation club began to take shape and the first club commenced in the Priestley Hall the community space at Mill Hill in May 2016, initially for a trial run period of four weeks. This was due to the efforts of Harry Stevens and a team of volunteers including Dot Read, Helen Parkin, Anne Forbes, Val Self and others. The first few weeks refugees were outnumbered by well meaning volunteers.

. But this gave us time to consolidate as a group, to set out the parameters of what we hoped to do and gave the newcomers to Mill Hill a chance to feel at home. We had decided on a non-directive, informal approach to learning. we set up tables as if for a cafe, and served tea and biscuits. To ensure that conversation didn't stall we set themes for each week so that one could always fall back to the theme if the English affliction of diffidence should set in. We began to set out games like dominoes and draughts, again so as to ease the flow of conversation.

Muhammad Nayyar a representative of the Refugee Council got in touch and proposed that alongside the club a health access signposting team could accompany the weekly activity. Slowly but surely the ratio of participants to volunteers shifted and then, with the assistance of our contacts made a year previously with the reception centre in Wakefield, the ratio changed completely - now we'd attract a weekly participant group of fifty to sixty plus ten to fifteen volunteers.

The room is filled with laughter and chatter, friends are meeting on a

weekly basis, the club reimburses travel costs from monies raised by various activities, we distribute women's sanitary products, assist people with applications and coursework. The kitchen is staffed by a formidable team. Birthdays are celebrated avidly - in the summer our own anniversary was celebrated with an outdoor fundraiser and party. The Lord Mayor visited - she's coming back for our Christmas party.

The core activities, what a former generation of Free Christians might have described as the Gospel responsibilities, of chapel life are being carried forward by this visiting group (nowadays only one or two of our volunteers is also a member of Mill Hill Chapel); assisting the needy, comforting the bereft and the lonely, providing support and guidance to the stranger and the hungry. In ways that no one could have anticipated the group also resonates with earlier congregational commitments to conversation and discourse. The past has this way of claiming us, just as compassion claims us, care claims us, the abandoned body of the betrayed child claims us.

Jo James, Mill Hill Chapel



Refugees & Asylum Seekers Conversation Club at Mill Hill Chapel. Photo by Jo James



Progressive Christianity Network Britain (PCN) is a membership organisation which works to promote and support open and contemporary Christian understanding.

For some years past, Cambridge Unitarian Church has been listed on PCN's website as an affiliated congregation, that is, a community sympathetic to the aims of PCN, and where 'people of progressive understanding' and 'questioners and explorers' might hope to find a welcome. Currently 61 churches are affiliated to PCN, and of those 9 (13%) are Unitarian.

But, until recently, that listing has been the full extent of our contact.

During the autumn and winter of 2016/17 Cambridge Unitarians ran an experimental Student Ministry based in our church. Our Student Ministry Worker organised a programme of events that we hoped would be relevant to students. One of these, in February 2017, was a talk by Rev Adrian Alker, a Church of England priest and Chair of PCN's Board of Trustees, on the subject of 'Is a radical church possible?'

This was our first direct interaction with PCN.

Adrian, on the other hand, had some previous contact with Unitarians. In an email to me, he wrote: 'Many PCN members are also Unitarians and of late my knowledge and experience of the Unitarian church has begun to broaden, thanks in part to our holding the PCN annual meeting at the Mill Hill Chapel in Leeds and having the privilege of meeting folk there.'

Cambridge Unitarians' entry on the PCN website describes us as follows:

'We are mostly Unitarian Christians here; we also have many Trinitarians and many more who, frankly, aren't worried at all about such things as long as they can follow the life and teachings of Jesus in an open-hearted and liberal fashion. Not surprisingly, PCN's Eight Points are ones we wholly agree with.'

This description reflects the situation of our congregation at the time when we became associated with PCN. There has been a gradual change since then. Currently, Cambridge Unitarians' hold on Christianity is light, and the description on our website perhaps better reflects our reality by saying that we 'look to Christian culture, and to a modern, minimalist form of spiritual thought and practice'. The phrase 'religious naturalism' can often be heard from our pulpit, and the ideas that the concept of God may be a human creation and that 'the whole world is filled with God' are more often aired than traditional Christianity.

PCN does appear to share some areas of commonality with Unitarians, or at least those Unitarians who are comfortable with using the Christian label in

some shape or form, or who draw on Christian ideas and traditions in shaping their personal and communal religious life. For example, we are with PCN when they claim that their members 'are unafraid to question traditional church teaching...value contemporary thought and recent biblical understanding' and 'do not offer a set of answers but invite [others] to join them in asking the questions'.

Adrian wrote to me that Unitarians' emphasis on 'a faith free of the constraints of adherence to an orthodoxy, and the desire to live one's life in accordance with the teachings of the fully human Jesus of Nazareth whilst bypassing the sterility of Christological arguments, and hence to see a unity, not in some trinitarian idea of the Godhead, but rather in humanity and in the web of the world's life, fits very well into much of the thinking and experiencing of PCN members'.

He notes four religious freedoms to which PCN holds:

- freedom from the binding claims of Christian orthodoxy;
- freedom to see the 'rites of passage' (baptism, marriage, funerals) as occasions to affirm the love in our lives in words and concepts which ring true to our experiences;
- freedom in worship to sing and say those words and sentences which don't offend the mind;
- freedom from a hierarchy which imposes its conformity and which values order more than honest searching.

And adds : 'If such freedoms characterize Unitarianism then I am delighted that PCN can embrace Unitarians within its membership'.

within its membership'.

Unitarians are also with PCN in not having a creed or statement of faith to which members must assent. The 'Eight Points', mentioned above, neatly sum up PCN's ethos, and it's not hard to see how it might appeal to many Unitarians. They read as follows:

Members of PCN are people who:

- *seek God, however understood, guided by the life and teachings of Jesus*
- *affirm that there are many ways to experience the Sacred and that we can draw on diverse sources of wisdom on our spiritual journeys.*
- *recognise that following Jesus leads us to act with compassion and to confront evil.*
- *place hospitality at the centre of our communal and worshipping life and see the sharing of bread and wine as an expression of our common humanity.*
- *seek to build communities that accept all who wish to share companionship without insisting on conformity.*
- *know that the way we behave towards others is the fullest expression of our faith.*
- *gain more insights in the search for understanding than we do in certainty.*
- *work together within and beyond the Church to achieve a just, peaceful and sustainable world.*

You may wish to muse on how useful these Eight Points are for you personally or for your church communities, and The Unitarian Christian Association might consider how it can co-operate with PCN.

Membership of PCN is open only to individuals (current annual subscription is £30).

There is no direct church or group membership category; instead churches or local groups sympathetic to PCN's aims are encouraged to promote personal membership among their congregations.

Paid-up members receive a quarterly newsletter 'Progressive Voices' by post, plus regular email updates, advance details of all PCN and some other conferences, reduced rate in conference fees, share in an extensive network of local groups across the country, and draw strength from the companionship found in them. PCN offers support and encouragement to its members if who are starting new local groups in areas currently without one.

PCN publishes a range of resources in-

The following two presentations were offered on the occasion of the Arthur Long Testimonial event held at Luther King House, Manchester on 15th July 2017. The third presentation will be published in the next edition of the Herald.

Arthur Long: Minister, Scholar, Raconteur, Father

We are here today to celebrate the life and work of my father, the Rev Dr Arthur Long, who died at the age of 86 on December 9th 2006. He was, of course, a much loved and respected elder statesman of the Unitarian movement, and a leading expert on the history of liberal Christian theology, but to me and my brother Chris, he was our dad. To my wife Sue and Chris's wife Michelle, he was a caring father-in-law Arthur and to his four grandchildren, he was just Grandpa. I am here to give a bit of insight into the man, not the minister.

But what strikes me, having been given the opportunity eleven years on from his death to think about him, is that unlike many people with a public

including study guides, talks and articles, and worship resources. Many of these are available free of charge via their website and can be readily downloaded. Back numbers of 'Progressive Voices' are also available online. There is a programme of day and evening events.

References:

Adrian Alker. Is a radical church possible? Reshaping its life, for Jesus' sake. 2016. Alresford: Christian Alternative Books. ISBN 978-1-78535-250-1.

<http://www.pcnbritain.org.uk>

<https://www.cambridgeunitarian.org>

Andrew Bethune, member, Cambridge Unitarian Church

persona, the public and the private man were no different.

Born in 1920, Arthur was one of four children of the Rev. Walter Long - my grandpa - himself an eminent Unitarian Minister in London, who was President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches in 1963.

Walter was a teetotal, firebrand socialist nonconformist of the old school, and having recently uncovered some hitherto forgotten documents and archives relating to his life and work, I am even more struck by his work and achievements. Walter was in effect a social worker in a dog collar, whose work for the people, especially the children, who attended Bell Street Mission in Marylebone, reflected his values and ideals.

Chris and I knew him as a cheery, benign old man, like a cliché grandad from a Ladybird book - he looked about 90 when he was around 50 - but a glance at the press cuttings from his life reveal a man of deep commitment to improving the lot of the poor through putting Christian principles into action. Accounts of the holidays he and his wife Amy ran for deprived London children at Bruce Cottage in Bognor Regis are a joy to read.

Arthur added to these qualities and values which he inherited from his father the scholarly mind and conciliatory instincts which made him a lifelong ecumenist, who strove throughout his long and distinguished career to bridge the gap between Unitarianism's more radical tendencies and the mainstream Christian churches. The UCA is very much part of his legacy.

Arthur was born in Loughborough, while his father was Minister to that congregation, but he grew up in Wembley, living much of his childhood in the shadow of the old Empire Stadium. I remember seeing those towering white walls over the railway line which ran past the end of their garden.

He was educated at Wembley County School and won a place at Exeter College, Oxford in the days when county grammar school boys were still a rarity at Oxford Colleges. Although he himself always admitted to having felt somewhat out of place at Oxford, he in fact blazed a trail at Exeter College which was followed by his younger brother, and then by his son (myself), granddaughter and two nephews. Few families can claim such broad and prolonged association with a single college.

He trained for the Ministry at Manchester (now Harris - Manchester) Col-

lege, and took up a Hibbert Scholarship at New College, Edinburgh, then served long and effective ministries in London and Lancashire. His lengthy ministry at Unity Church, Bolton coincided with a period of great social and economic upheaval and hardship in the Lancashire cotton towns, but he kept the church there in its traditional place at the heart of the community. In those days in industrial Lancashire, the local church of whatever denomination was in effect the parish church to those who lived in its shadow and that of the Lowryesque cotton mills. We lived our childhood in a real-life Lowry painting.

The locals just thought of him as "the Vicar", and Chris and I were known as "the Vicar's boys", especially if we did anything naughty - heinous crimes like riding a go-kart down the street in a reckless manner.

He may not have been the Vicar as such, but our childhood was awash with vicars, priests and nuns. Always an enthusiast for ecumenism (an "ecumaniac", to use a term coined at his funeral by Jeff Gould), Arthur was for thirteen years Secretary of the Bolton Council of Churches, in which role he enjoyed warm and active relationships with all shades of the Christian community in Bolton. Our childhood memories are of incessantly answering the door or the telephone to clergy of all shades of Christianity, and it was only in later life that I came to realise how unusual and precious such inter-denominational cooperation was.

Whilst ministering among the people of a working class Lancashire community, presiding over a church which was very much a social centre as well as a place of worship, he was like his father a social worker in a very poor part of the town.

He wrote and produced an annual pantomime, starring members of the congregation - very much a highlight of the social calendar, and loved organising social events. He once organised a complete "mock wedding", at which members of the congregation took all the parts of a traditional wedding, took vows in church, then enjoyed a reception and party in the Church Hall. He took the congregation away for a fun weekend at Hucklow, and in every way cared deeply about their welfare. More than once, he interrupted family holidays to return home to conduct a funeral of a loyal member of the congregation.

Yet he was also an awesomely erudite thinker and writer. Arthur developed a career in theological academia alongside his day job in Bolton, firstly as a tutor, then as Principal of Unitarian College, Manchester, a training college for the Unitarian Ministry. In this role, which he took up in 1975, his ecumenical instincts again came to the fore when he brought the College into the inter-denominational Northern Federation for Training in Ministry in 1984. Through his broad outlook, he brought a Unitarian perspective into the wider theological community, and was appointed as an Honorary Lecturer in the Department of Religions and Theology at Manchester University.

He enjoyed the academic phase of his career every bit as much as he has enjoyed ministering to working class folk in Bolton. He was honoured with the Presidency of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches in 1983, twenty years after his father had held the same post, and in 1995, he was awarded a Doctor of Theology degree by the United Protestant Theological Institute at Kolozsvár (Cluj) in Romania. His freedom

of the General Assembly Certificate and his doctorate certificate are among the items that I have brought along today.

His warm relations with the flourishing Unitarian communities of Eastern Europe predated the fall of Communism, and were another manifestation of his outward-looking and tolerant approach: he drove, would you believe, to Romania in his little Vauxhall Chevette in 1979 for a conference and preaching engagement. Lord knows what those surly border guards must have thought of the Englishman in a dog collar driving through the then very real Iron Curtain.

Arthur loved writing and public speaking. In this respect I have followed in his footsteps. He was a prolific writer of sermons and articles, whose style always mixed scholarly erudition with down-to-earth wit. He was founding Editor of the Unitarian Christian Herald and a regular contributor to The Inquirer and Faith and Freedom. He continued to preach well into his eighties, and conducted services until shortly before his death. As late as 2004, he appeared twice in ITV's now sadly defunct "My Favourite Hymns", and took great delight in the venue for filming being the magnificent St Walburga's Roman Catholic Church in Preston.

But what was he like as a person? Well, as I said earlier, really no different! He was absolutely dedicated to his family, and doted on his wife, our mother Margaret, whom he met when she acted as temporary organist at Stamford Street Chapel, where he was Minister.

The story goes that she reluctantly agreed to stand in for her then boyfriend, who was organist there, when

he went on holiday. The said boyfriend must have regretted that request!

Arthur was a real softie, a true romantic - a quality I have singularly failed to inherit! He would write acrostic love poems to his wife for every wedding anniversary and birthday. Margaret was rather more cynical and hard-headed, and I never saw any reciprocal poetry! He illustrated Christmas cakes with poetry and words from Scripture written in icing, and his tastes in music, theatre and literature were as catholic as his theology. Indeed, I always feel he was somewhat constrained by his wife's refined and narrow tastes in the arts, especially music. She abhorred popular music in any form, which must have been difficult as that art form blossomed in the swinging sixties. He secretly rather liked it, and I remember her horror when he preached a sermon extolling the lyrics and music of Elvis Presley's *The Wonder of You* when it topped the singles chart in 1970. I remember him furtively asking me and Chris to take a recording of it off the radio onto the reel-to-reel tape recorder that he had bought for use in church.

*And when you smile the world is brighter
You touch my hand and I'm a king
Your kiss to me is worth a fortune
Your love for me is everything*

*I'll guess I'll never know the reason why
You love me as you do
That's the wonder
The wonder of you*

Romantic or what?

So perhaps it is fitting that I conclude with some words not from the Scriptures, not from one of Shakespeare's sonnets, but from David Gates, of the 70s soft-rock band Bread.

His song *Everything I Own* is a lament for his father, who died young, but it has al-

ways spoken to me about Arthur's paternal love which was so closely aligned to his love and concern for those to whom he ministered:

*You taught me how to love
What it's of, what it's of
You never said too much
But still you showed the way
And I knew from watching you.*

God bless him.

Adrian Long

Apology

We would like to apologise to Mr Brian Cooper for the omission of a line in the article he wrote "Jesus Prophet of Peace" published in August 2017 edition. The whole paragraph has been reprinted below with the missing line shown in bold.

*"At the Passover meal, the senior Jewish male in the family would tell the story - and proclaim Jewry's coming liberation. In 1st century AD Palestine, that meant throwing off the Roman yoke by some violent uprising - hence the nervousness of the Roman authorities. Passover expressed primitive understanding of the Israelite deity Yahweh as God of battles - the one who slaughtered the Egyptians **and gave the Israelites go-ahead to expel or massacre the inhabitants of Canaan - Amorites, Canaanites, and others** - "they utterly destroyed them and their cities - there was not one survivor left" [Numbers 21] - to establish a 'Promised Land'. "*

Thank you Brian for bringing this to our attention.

REV DR ARTHUR J LONG

Apparently, a former ministerial colleague who recently attended an event in The Other Place, expressed his doubts that I actually knew Arthur Long.

Well let me set the record straight on that for a start! I may not have known Arthur as long as some people but I first met him in Northern Ireland in 1984, before commencing my ministerial training at UCM that autumn.

Arthur was the guest preacher at All Souls Church, Belfast and I was in the congregation. I even remember the theme of the sermon. Based on a verse from the Book of Acts, where it refers to the ship in which St Paul lets down four anchors. Arthur preached on four “ships” which were anchors for the church- worship, fellowship etc. My minister, the Rev Bill McMillan and his wife Sheila invited Arthur to Sunday lunch at the manse in Dunmurry, where I was organist and choirmaster at the time. It was supposed to be an opportunity for Arthur and me to become acquainted but I was shy and in awe of my prospective principal and Arthur was at his most reticent socially.

However, my initial impression of Arthur Long was soon to be revised as I got to know him better. I will never forget the first Christmas Dinner at the old UCM on Daisybank Road. Addressing a dining room of mainly lay-students (we theologians being a tiny minority) Arthur began by talking about the significance of the Feast of Christmas, from both an historical and theological perspective. He even ventured into a discussion on the Virgin Birth. One could see the lay-students becoming restless or simply glazing over. But just when they thought that they had rightly assessed Mr Long to be a boring old fart, he proceeded to tell this yarn as his closing remarks, following on from his speculation on the Virgin Birth;

A young man met a delightful young lady on a night out. He decided to chat her up. Things were going so well that he decided to clinch the deal by asking, “How do you like your eggs in the morning?” Not anticipating the devastating reply, “Unfertilized, thank you!”

The lay-students couldn’t believe their ears and neither could I! Well done Arthur, I thought. You’ve shown them that all Christians aren’t boring!

When UCM physically moved to Luther King House, in my second year of college, Arthur really came into his own and to use a phrase from the Gospels, “came unto his own”! He absolutely thrived in the ecumenical atmosphere that was LKH. He loved to be around so many students and staff from the other colleges. I think his attitude to the whole experience can be summed up in a two word phrase that has now gone into the language of a number of past students, not all of them from UCM. It arose from an ecumenical afternoon tea hosted in his room by one of the Northern Baptist College students, Vaughan Rees. Having enjoyed about an hour of food, tea and conversation, Arthur suddenly rose from an armchair, made his way rapidly to the door and shaking Vaughan by the hand, pronounced the afternoon, “Most congenial!” A phrase I use to this day!

Despite Arthur’s somewhat diffident manner, he was immensely popular with the students of all denominations. He made an effort to be accessible that no other member of staff, least of all a college principal did. One example of this was a college disco held in what was then the TV Room. Many of us had been to The Huntsman in Rusholme earlier in the evening and returned to LKH to find Arthur leaning nonchalantly against a wall in the TV Room, with an open neck shirt and chewing gum, looking cool, like some mature version of The Fonz! One member of the college cleaning staff that had stayed behind after work to attend the disco took me aside and said, “Your principal is bloody brilliant!”

Another example was Red Nose Day. None of the other colleges staff, much less their principals, sported an actual Red Nose on the day but Arthur did, not just at LKH but down at the university. He entered into the spirit of the day by also writing on the Red Nose Day Graffiti Board in the foyer. It read thus;

"God is dead!" Nietzsche
"Nietzsche is dead!" God

I think that it is fair to say that food played an important part in Arthur's life. He had an immense capacity for putting away vast quantities of food. To the frequent enquiry, "More pudding Principal?" the response was invariably, "Don't mind if I do!"

Some of us remember a retirement dinner for Arthur at a Chinese restaurant in Manchester when Arthur polished off all the leftovers from everyone's plate. The students who had organised the meal were horrified a few weeks later to hear on the news that the restaurant had subsequently been closed down by Environmental Health because of an infestation of cockroaches and rats!

Arthur was much sought after as an after dinner speaker, not least at the college's Past and Present Students Union. Brenda Catherall vividly remembers an occasion when our colleague, David Steers was dispatched at short notice to Rusholme to obtain a couple of bottles of non-alcoholic wine for Arthur and the Methodist Principal, the Rev Graham Slater. Graham Slater took one sip of the said wine and promptly put it down again. We don't know if Graham Slater suspected that the wine wasn't actually non-alcoholic after all but Arthur on the other hand declared the wine to be fine and proceeded to work his way through a bottle. When it came to Arthur's speech, we began to suspect ourselves as the speech was at times uncharacteristically animated and at others somewhat rambling! The highlight being towards the end of the oration when Arthur dramatically stated,

"And I remember what Nichol Cross said to me!".....There followed a long and pregnant pause after which Arthur, finger

"That's funny I don't remember!"

Having finished one bottle of the allegedly non-alcoholic wine, Arthur went home with Graham Slater's bottle under his arm!

Arthur could be extremely sensitive and supportive of his students as many of them could testify. Brenda Catherall fondly remembers a supportive letter from Arthur following her father's death. Arthur, ever one for poetic quotations had ended his letter with the words,

"Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all."

Which brings me neatly to my closing remarks. For a number of years at the annual Christmas Concert at LKH I ran the Alternative Choir, which Arthur was happy to join in with. We specialised in satire of both staff and students with a particular emphasis on the more fundamentalist members of the community. This included parodies of some of their most loved worship songs.

On the last Christmas Concert before his retirement, one such song was "Jesus we love you, we worship you and adore you. Glorify your name in all the earth". We all sang the first verse and then without warning to Arthur, the choir dropped to its knees at his feet and with arms upraised in mock charismatic fervour sang, "Arthur we love you, we worship and adore you. Glorify your name in all the earth". It was meant to be an amusing moment, which it was, but it was also deeply moving as it showed how much he was loved by students of all denominations and of none.

Arthur, we loved you but it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.

He was much loved and because of that his loss is deeply felt, even now all these many years after his passing.

God bless you, Principal Long!
Alan Kennedy

Future Events

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 10th March 2018, 1pm
Ullet Road Unitarian Church,
57 Ullet Road, Sefton Park,
Liverpool. L17 2AA

