

# AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2013

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[From the Chair](#)

## From the Chair

It seems almost impossible to believe that it is now over two years ago that I was elected as Vice Chair of NASACRE.

During that time, it was a particular pleasure and privilege to work alongside Bruce Gill, in his role as Chair. Bruce is possessed of great wisdom and an enviable ability to think clearly and strategically about the complex issues which



have surrounded us during that time. As I prepared to step into his shoes at our AGM in Birmingham in May, I realised what a tremendous debt we all owe to him for his dedication and enthusiasm and I only hope that I can make a worthwhile contribution of my own as we look forward to what the future might bring for us. I am so grateful to know that we will continue to have the benefit of Bruce's expertise in his role as Executive Assistant, as well as the fresh perspectives of our new Vice Chair, David Hampshire (who despite his surname, is actually the RE Adviser for Cornwall!). We are fortunate to be part of a larger Executive Group of dedicated colleagues without whom the work of NASACRE would simply be impossible.

We already have a very full agenda to keep us busy in the coming academic year and beyond. SACREs are facing many challenges in an educational environment which is constantly changing and in which religious education and collective worship are often misunderstood or even ignored. Yet we know what a positive and powerful difference they can make to the lives of children and young people when they are done and done well. SACREs have been playing a vital part in ensuring that this message is being heard as loudly as possible and have been able to make a significant difference to the quality of teaching and learning in

many classrooms as well as offering a range of wider experiences to the pupils around the country. We want to share and celebrate that excellent practice and look forward to receiving copies of your Annual Reports and posting them on our [website](#) so that your successes can enthuse and inspire others.

Those Annual Reports are certain to show that alongside such exciting initiatives, SACREs have been struggling to understand how and why RE has seemingly been marginalised as a result of official government policies.

Through the efforts of the [RE Council](#) of which NASACRE is of course a part, our subject community has done its best to redress the balance. The RE Subject Review has been one of its key pieces of work in recent months and the final document will be launched on 23rd October. This stands alongside the review of the National Curriculum but has been independently created and funded and will of course have no statutory role. However, it is likely to be hugely influential and it is for each SACRE to come to its own decision about what use, if any, it wishes to make of it. NASACRE has been represented at every stage of the process as the Chair (initially Bruce, followed by me) has had a place on the steering group. Many of you – individually and collectively – will have also submitted responses to the draft paper, which has been an essential way of ensuring that the voice of SACREs has been heard. We look forward to hearing your views on it in the coming weeks. Once launched, the RE Subject Review together with a briefing paper, will be available on our website. You may also be interested to know that a series of launch events have been provisionally booked in the following locations: Oxford (5 November), York (12 November), Liverpool (21 November) and Bristol (28 November). Further information will be made available on the [RE Council website](#) by mid-September.

Another key document for the RE community will be Ofsted's latest report due to be published in early autumn. The provisional title of this report is *RE: realising*

*the potential.* This will be the last of the major triennial reports from Ofsted and although these are based on a very small sample of schools, they are a crucial source of evidence for SACREs, enabling them to reflect on how their schools are performing compared to those visited by the RE inspection team. Those of us who were at our AGM in Birmingham will have heard Alan Brine, Ofsted's National Lead for RE, talk about the findings in the report and his presentation can be found [here](#) on our website if you wish to share those with colleagues at your next meeting.

Perhaps one of the most significant events for RE in the last few months was a seminar at Lambeth Palace in early July, hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury for those involved in education in the Church of England. Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Education was the principal contributor. NASACRE noted with great interest his comments about RE in answer to a question from the Bishop of Oxford. Mr. Gove admitted that RE had been an 'unintended casualty' of many recent curriculum reforms and acknowledged that he had thought that RE's 'special status was protection enough'. He expressed an interest in moves to rectify this situation. NASACRE, with its member bodies which represent the key stakeholders in RE, has written to Mr. Gove offering its support and expertise in developing any such initiatives. We will/have of course published his reply on our website as soon as we received it. We hope that this proves to be a significant moment for RE and of course for all that NASACRE and individual SACREs are trying to achieve.

I have no doubt that events will continue to move with great rapidity during this autumn term and as your Executive, we will do our utmost to represent your interests and concerns as skillfully and efficiently as possible. Our new website

will be an essential tool in allowing us to communicate with you quickly, so please make sure you check it regularly! We look forward to keeping in touch and hope that the new academic year will be one in which SACREs continue to flourish and grow.

Best wishes to you all,

Lesley Prior

## NASACRE AGM 2013

### *Lesley Prior offers a Chair's perspective on the AGM*

The NASACRE AGM took place in Birmingham on 23rd May. 70 SACREs were represented at a very successful and well attended event. In what had been a challenging year for us and for our work, it was encouraging to see so many people coming together who are passionately committed to their SACREs and the contribution they make to promoting and supporting high quality religious education and collective worship in schools across the country.



In addition to Alan Brine's preview of the major Ofsted Report, delegates listened to a highly stimulating address by Dr. Mark Chater, Director of the Culham St Gabriel's Trust (a major supporter of various RE initiatives) and former Subject Officer for RE at the QCA/QCDA. Mark invited us to think in new and very different ways about the role of SACREs in an educational landscape which is very different to the one which existed when they were first established. His exceptionally challenging presentation gives much food for thought and NASACRE recognises the need for itself and of course, its member bodies, to reflect again on our role, nature and purpose. Mark has urged us to re-imagine our place in the contemporary educational context and we must decide how we might wish to do this. The Executive has welcomed Mark's kind offer to share his thoughts further with us and you can explore his presentation for yourself, as well as a paper outlining those discussions via our [website](#). This offers some key points for you to consider at your own SACRE meetings later this term if you should wish to do so. We would

welcome any comments and contributions you might wish to share.

During the afternoon session at the AGM, delegates were able to meet in small groups, facilitated by members of the Executive, to discuss three significant questions:

- What can SACREs do to promote closer working relationships with academies in their locality?
- How can NASACRE and its member bodies best press LAs to comply with their statutory duties to support SACREs?
- What should be the focus of Agreed Syllabus Reviews in the current context of the RE Subject Review led by the RE Council?

There were (perhaps unsurprisingly!) many different responses, highlighting the diversity which exists in the world of SACREs.

In relation to the first question about academies, there were many useful examples of good practice which we plan to share via the website. These will build on the [leaflet](#) we have already created which encourages academies to maintain their links with the local SACRE and its agreed syllabus. If a SACRE and its syllabus are seen as offering something useful, academies will want to have a relationship with them, even if they are not legally obliged to do so. There are issues about how that relationship might be managed, not least in terms of potential financial implications, but also in terms of advice, support and training. NASACRE plans to continue lobbying academy chains and trusts to ensure that there is proper provision for RE and CW and to be aware of the role of SACREs in promoting this.

The second question was particularly contentious after both key note speakers

had urged us to consider a move away from a 'compliance culture' into one which focuses instead on SACREs providing schools with something they see as having inherent value in itself, regardless of the current statutory requirements. Many delegates did see this as a sensible way to move ahead and indeed are already working within those parameters, but others feel that if the legal obligations are there, they should be properly met. They argued that those obligations require LAs to take RE seriously and serve to protect the subject, providing funding and support for it which make a positive difference in the classroom. There was a strong sense that SACREs have a tremendous amount to offer, but need to be more proactive in proclaiming it more loudly and more widely in a whole range of contexts, including the media.

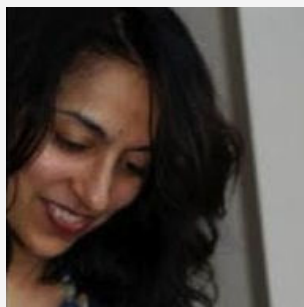
The third question relates of course to the RE Subject Review which has been a major piece of work in the last few months, led by the RE Council and involving representatives of NASACRE on the steering group. The final document is not as substantial as the Non Statutory National Framework for RE of 2004 and is not intended to be a model syllabus for our subject but it is something that many SACREs have looked forward to reading, particularly those where a review of the agreed syllabus is pending. Delegates at the AGM considered the place of this work alongside the National Curriculum review and the importance of parity with other subjects while retaining the integrity of RE in its own right. There was an emphasis on the need to continue with some local determination for RE, allowing different parts of the country to include content which is relevant to their own context. Many delegates would welcome not only some guidance from NASACRE on how to use the new document, but also guidance about how to revise syllabuses. There was an awareness that new syllabuses need to build on some of the elements mentioned in the Ofsted Report, such as an emphasis on enquiry led





learning. All work of this kind does however require adequate funding and support and many delegates were concerned that this might not be forthcoming as a result of increasingly tight economic constraints.

The AGM highlighted the importance of all of these issues for its member SACREs. The Executive welcomes these responses to the questions posed and recognises the need for NASACRE to consider how to take these points forward. It is hoped that a series of regional conferences will facilitate this process and the new website is also a way of sustaining debate and discussion until the **next AGM in London on 22nd May 2014**. We will look forward to welcoming you there then and in the meantime, wish you a fruitful and productive SACRE year.



*New executive member Sushma Sahajpal discusses with Mark Chater some of the points raised in his keynote address.*

## **Challenging SACREs: Can you help?**

NASACRE's 2013 AGM invited SACREs to "be inspired and challenged". This, at a time when the landscape facing RE in general and SACREs in particular has never appeared more challenging and uncertain.

A keynote speaker Mark Chater, Culham St Gabriel's Director, shared his view on

the role of SACREs, both historically, and potentially in the future. His appraisal highlights how SACREs may be seen by some in the RE community and beyond it, challenging us to examine and articulate our role and relevance explicitly.

NASACRE will post a longer article on the website shortly, exploring the issues raised by this talk. In the meantime you might like to take up the challenge of examining some of Mark's observations in your next SACRE meeting.

**Chater's Challenge:** These questions are distilled from his talk, so you might consider exploring at least one from each of 3 broad sections and sharing your views with us and thus, with other SACREs. Your direct perspective, on these externally-raised challenges to SACREs, could be an invaluable contribution to the SACRE community and its engagement with the wider RE world.

## **1. SACRE Identity**

a. **Why are we here in 2013?** What specifically motivates your members to attend SACRE meetings? Does your constitution, agenda and outcomes progress that intention?

b. **Do you see distinctions in your actual work on RE, CW and SMSC?** If so, how would your SACRE delineate the boundaries?

c. **How are your SACRE's activities relevant to supporting excellent school RE?** What activities have/could replace previous, even statutory ones that aren't directly helping schools?

d. **What resourcing could local SACREs offer schools that a national framework could not?** What do you offer?

## **2. Subject Loyalty**

a. **How would your SACRE feel about entrusting *academic content* to National**

**Subject leadership?** Who ought to be consulted in a handover? Which SACRE duties would you re-allocate to such a leadership and which retain locally?

b. **On being different**, Mark Chater stated that RE needs to be treated like other subjects. Do you agree? If not, how is RE different as taught? Ought it to remain so in your SACRE's opinion?

c. **On being included**. How does SACRE feel about RE's exclusion from national or cross-curriculum initiatives? How could RE practically safeguard against this?

### 3. 'Team RE' Performance

a. **Consistency**. If you could redesign a local SACRE to maximise contribution to schools, what competencies and expertise would you wish to see on it? If different to current ones, how could you sustainably secure these?

b. **How can SACREs respond to cross-border 'customers', e.g. Academy chains?**

Do we need one co-ordinated National Team RE? Is it time for commitment to RE to be beyond our own SACRE or representation group within it? How can SACREs or NASACRE work with the REC on this?

c. **Quality Assurance**. Are standards best maintained by voluntary bodies with shrinking budgets or handed over to a stringent, well-resourced national standards RE body? Any concerns or considerations?

d. **Is having 152 agreed syllabuses necessary?** Could having broad strokes defined nationally allow SACREs to focus on supplying exciting, local, current issues/events as RE resources? What memorable learning and/or innovative contribution could your SACRE make from the local perspective? Any disadvantages?

**In conclusion:** *"Let us not imagine for a minute longer, that we can go back to the way things were..."*

Are SACREs ready to claim contemporary relevance by contributing to a cross-local authority, sustainably high-quality, creative solution, systematising the best of our collective and respective practices?

Change is already here. Our challenge is to choose the nature of our response to it.

**You may wish to consider discussing some of the questions or points raised in this article at your next SACRE meeting.**

## A DATE FOR YOUR DIARIES

### **NASACRE AGM 2014**

**Thursday 22nd May 2014**

**Methodist Central Hall**

**LONDON**

Details to follow in next newsletter.



## All Party Parliamentary Group on RE

*Executive assistant Bruce Gill describes the work of this parliamentary group in supporting RE*

The All Party Parliamentary Group on RE (APPG), launched in the summer of 2012, was perhaps the greatest achievement of the, sadly, unsuccessful campaign to instate RE as one of the humanities subjects in the EBacc. It grew from an Early Day Motion on this matter tabled by Stephen Lloyd MP for Eastbourne and Willingdon, now the APPG Chair.

At its first working meeting, held at the end of November 2012, Lesley Prior, then NASACRE Vice-Chair, gave evidence to its inaugural Inquiry into the supply of and support for teachers of RE. The second oral evidence session took place in January and on 18th March 2013 the report of this first Inquiry was published, attracting major media coverage.

The report entitled [RE: The Truth Unmasked](#), found that one in four primary pupils was being taught the subject by teaching assistants and that more than half the RE teachers in secondary schools did not have a qualification to teach the subject. It highlighted the point that the inclusion of non-specialists in the total number of RE teachers given by the DfE gave the false impression that there were enough RE teachers and skewed the statistics regarding the need to train more RE specialists and the need to maintain RE teacher training bursaries. It found that the ability of SACREs to provide support for teachers of RE at the local level has been dramatically reduced by local authority funding decisions and the impact of the academisation programme. Teachers' access to continuing professional development was now a postcode lottery depending on the resources of the local SACRE, diocese, proximity to training or the priority given to RE in schools.

The APPG described its findings as “unacceptable” and concluded:

*“A raft of recent policies have had the effect of downgrading RE in status on the school curriculum, and the subject is now under threat as never before, just at the moment when it is needed most.”*

Following the appalling terrorist murder of Drummer Lee Rigby in Woolwich on 22 May 2013 and the subsequent attacks on mosques and Muslim centres across the country, Stephen Lloyd MP tabled another Early Day Motion; this time on RE and Tolerance (EDM 272) stating:

*“That this House notes that Religious Education (RE) is a rigorous academic subject that allows young people to increase their knowledge and understanding of a range of religious and non-religious beliefs; further notes the importance of*

*mutual understanding and the community cohesion it engenders, particularly at this time of heightened tension; recognises the contribution the subject RE plays in fostering mutual understanding and respect between people with different religious and non-religious beliefs; supports the efforts of schools and local authorities who give RE the attention and status it merits in the curriculum; and urges that measures to ensure that all children explore and discuss religious and non-religious beliefs at school be pursued by the Government.”*

Within a few days 26 MPs had signed the motion.

(See also next article: *Responding to traumatic incidents – Woolwich 2013*)

On 24th June the APPG hosted a reception at the House of Commons entitled Celebrating Good RE. This event marked the success of the RE Quality Mark and the REC’s Young Ambassador scheme both launched last academic year and initiatives which put youth voice – the opinions and ideas of our students – at the heart of planning for RE’s future.

You can read about what happened at this event [here](#).

The presentations by the children and young people provided a powerful reminder of our current responsibility to protect and promote good RE and of the important role that the APPG now plays in that struggle.



Bruce Gill

Executive Assistant

## Responding to traumatic incidents – Woolwich 2013

On the day before the NASACRE AGM a tragic and violent incident in Woolwich resulted in the death of a serving soldier, Drummer Lee Rigby. It was sadly clear that this would have an impact on those living nearby, on relationships between faith communities and on schools as they supported pupils and their families.

Spontaneous tributes and sympathy appeared from politicians and members of the public and faith and belief communities. All, including the Muslim communities expressed their sadness and unequivocally condemned this brutality. Unfortunately the media also reported some responses that attempted to set faith communities at odds with each other. There were groups that tried to take advantage of the situation by, in the guise of ‘paying respect,’ planned marches and demonstrations that could pose a threat particularly to Muslim communities and individuals near to the incident itself. Attacks were made further afield on community centres and even a boarding school, whilst some posts on social media have struggled to find an appropriate tone between patriotism and jingoism.

SACRE members know that extraordinary events test us as human beings and also test teachers trying to keep young people emotionally safe, whilst encouraging them to become enlightened, empathetic adults. Children learn from what we all say and don’t say about the world and our place in it and also from our actions; unexpected incidents can make it difficult for everyone to have a repertoire with which to respond.

All children need support in dealing with issues of life and death; they are learning that life is unpredictable and that natural and humanmade disasters create



catastrophe and tragedy. They will also be asking why innocent people die and how can they help. For young children in times of unease a calm presence and simple reassurances make the world a safer, more manageable place. Because adults determine the emotional climate for young children, adult reactions impact on children's reactions. All of us, from infants unable to put feelings into words, to adults who have experienced years of world events, have the same questions when facing catastrophic events: Could that happen to me or someone I love? Will we be okay? Some children who saw the images on television became extremely anxious or sensitive to potential threats.

Lewisham SACRE has previously provided advice to its schools focussing on the RE curriculum, collective worship and the pastoral support of pupils. For example advice was prepared following the tragedies of 9/11 and 7/7 and the tsunami in 2004. Soon after the Woolwich attack, Denise worked with Shaun Burns, Primary RE Adviser for Southwark Diocese (also Vice Chair of Lewisham SACRE) on some generic advice that could be personalised by SACREs and schools / academies to support them following this new crisis. This was enhanced by inputs from many SACRE members from Lewisham, Greenwich and Lambeth. The involvement of all of these individuals and groups helped to ensure the advice could be strong and inclusive and that material is now on the [NASACRE website](#).

In North Yorkshire, the LA and partners have been working together to address increased extremist activity, particularly with regard to the use of social networking to promulgate offensive racist comments. An alert was sent to North Yorkshire secondary schools, and is a message relevant across the country. It reinforced key messages about safe and responsible use of social networking and emphasised the severity of posting, or passing on, offensive racist comments as

well as 'hate' messages against other groups or their members, including Islamophobic, homophobic and anti-Semitic comments, pointing out that such behaviour could be classed as criminal activity under the Malicious Communications Act.

Sadly the Woolwich events will be given prominence again in the autumn when the two men accused of this murder are brought to trial.



Denise Chaplin Nasr Moussa Emam

## Membership matters

### **Are your SACRE's details correct?**

Thank you to all who have provided updated details for your SACRE. There may still be some inaccuracies as people have changed post. I would be grateful if you would click on this [link](#) and check your SACRE's data once more. It is very important to us that we are able to communicate with you effectively, but we can only do this if our records are up to date.

If there are amendments, please [email me](#) and I will update your record.

Sharon Artley



## Christian /Muslim Forum Conference on Religious Literacy and Spirituality

14 March 2013

*Chair of Buckinghamshire SACRE, Valerie McFarlane reports on this conference.*

Recently Michael Gove said, "I think RE has suffered as a result of my belief that the protection that it had in the curriculum (the fact that RE is compulsory) was sufficient, and I don't think that I've done enough" adding that he wanted to work with faith groups to improve RE teaching.

An opportunity to do more has arisen for him through a response sent on behalf of the Christian Muslim Forum written by Julian Bond, Director CMF, Maurice Irfan Coles, Muslim education specialist and Dr Julia Ipgrave, Christian education specialist.

This response was an outcome of the conference, entitled Religious Literacy and Spirituality, exploring these two concepts in detail. What an excellent model of interfaith collaboration.

The programme for the day was 5 interactive workshops and a key note address *Spirituality in the context of Religious Literacy* by Kate Christopher a passionate Head of RE. The venue, Westminster Abbey, was significant for me as it creates a sense of awe and wonder. Kate Christopher likened a belief in the power of religious literacy and the essential nature of its quality of connecting people with their history and culture to the determination of the stone masons who chipped away for decades, but never lived to see their cathedrals finished. Yet their labours have enabled countless generations of people to understand the power of human yearning for the divine.

Linking this theme was the workshop on *Pilgrimage Then and Now* in which children visiting Westminster Abbey are allowed a time of quiet reflection. This is such a key element that RE can offer children and its value and practice was described in the workshop on Christian meditation with children. Meditation is about simply learning to *be*, simply existing in God's presence rather than talking to him; for it was argued, God is simple. Practices in mindfulness are becoming increasingly popular with adults and it has been demonstrated that all pupils respond well to these valuable elements of stillness, listening and calm that I

believe are a unique component in RE.

A signature workshop for me was *The power of story – a journey through the Book of Job* prepared by the Dare2engage team's programme for 6th formers on *Rage Hope and Despair*. This programme harnesses technology most effectively using 22 pieces of art commissioned for the programme leading the students through the emotions depicted in this perplexing story of Job supported by an audio narrative including music to aid the exploration of 'why do we suffer?' This programme indicates what a powerful subject RE can become and the essential requirement for it to be delivered in a sensitive and skilful manner in the classroom by dedicated and qualified RE teachers.

Religious literacy is about connecting to emotions and making sense of art, literature, music which are so much a part of our multi-cultural, multi faith world. Bishop Cheetham summed it up well by saying that the conference themes were important not merely for us and for all our schools, but for all society. For him, the key question was 'How do we live well together?'



## The new NASACRE website

*Webmaster Sharon Artley describes some of the new developments on the website.*

We hope that you have begin to explore the new [website](#) and that you are finding it useful and easy to navigate. We are pleased to receive feedback and ideas for articles or new support materials. Please email [memsec@nasacre.org.uk](mailto:memsec@nasacre.org.uk)

Some areas of the website are now password protected. All SACREs which have paid their subscriptions for this new academic year will have received the username and password. The officers of your SACRE have the details.

### **Your next SACRE agenda**

New materials have been added to [this section](#) including:

- 3forRE Scheme – exciting opportunities for all teachers of RE
- SACRE Guidance: Following the violent incident in Woolwich on Wednesday 22nd May 2013
- School Governors: responsibilities for RE (also in Resources)

### **Resources**

There are also new materials in the [Resources section](#) including:

- *School Governors: responsibilities for RE.*

Written by Dr Barbara Wintersgill (author of *RE: the truth unmasked* – see

Bruce Gill's article above) these are two briefing papers one for primary the other for secondary for school governors and outline schools' responsibilities with regard to RE, give an overview of the problems identified by the report and suggest some actions governors might undertake to bring about improvement in their schools.

- *RE and Academies* This NASACRE leaflet offers ways in which SACREs can give support and guidance to Academies with RE and the use of the locally agreed syllabus. In addition, there are also links to two useful on academies produced by NATRE.

Both these areas of the website are worth browsing in full.

### **SACRE reports**

Thank you to those SACREs who have sent their annual reports. If you have sent yours, please check it is there. If you have yet to send your report, please see [this area](#).

## Inter Faith Week



# Inter Faith Week

*With only two months until Inter Faith Week (17 –23 November), here are some links which SACREs may find useful.*

**Website:**

<http://www.interfaithweek.org>

**Flyer:** A new flyer has been produced for 2013

<http://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/flyer-for-2013>

**Event registration:** You can register an event and have it on a national map

<http://www.interfaithweek.co.uk/events/submit-an-event>

**Twitter:** Follow the Inter Faith Week on Twitter

[@IFWeek](https://twitter.com/IFWeek)

**2012 event list:** Be inspired by the vast array of diverse events which happened last year.

<http://www.interfaithweek.co.uk/resources/reports>



## Resources

### ***Who Am I?* The religious identity of young people**

Suitable for: Ages 11–18

DVD, produced by Art Beyond Belief, £20 including postage and packing.

To buy: contact David Sparrow on 07412 974454 or by email: [david@art-beyond-belief.com](mailto:david@art-beyond-belief.com)

The *Who Am I?* set comprises two DVDs: *The Event* (1 hour 4 minutes) and *The Group Discussions* (1 hour 29 minutes) and are the result of a day's conference held at Slough Grammar School in September 2011 organised by Stella Neal, Head of Philosophy, Critical Thinking and Religious Studies. *The Event* focuses on a talk given by Dr Eleanor Nesbitt, Professor Emerita of Religions and Education, University of Warwick and discusses a number of pertinent issues to do with the religious identity of young people. The second DVD, *The Group Discussions* shows discussions on eight different themes including dress and identity, language and parents, religion and culture. The young people involved are very articulate and the quality of the filming is such that it can be used effectively in the classroom.

There are two guides to using the material, both of which can be found on the *Group Discussions* DVD. Careful watching of the material is highly recommended, so that a teacher or group leader can choose just the right clip to illustrate a particular point and facilitate discussion. The material is intended for use in schools, colleges, inter-faith groups and mono faith communities. Although

the DVDs, especially Dr Eleanor Nesbitt's talk, appear more immediately accessible to secondary school pupils, they could also be used – with judicious planning – within the primary context. As Hugh Boulter, Secretary to Oxford Diocesan Committee for Inter-Faith Concerns explains in his introduction, the value of this resource lies in its capacity to show young people of different faiths taking their religion seriously, thereby encouraging and developing all-important skills of empathy in those who watch it. It will beautifully complement and 'bring alive' any religious education work using the written media. Moreover, it provides an excellent 'model' of how inter-faith dialogue should be conducted, namely in a respectful and positive manner.

**This powerful and thought-provoking resource is very good value for money and is highly recommended for the RE classroom.**

Caroline BonTeacher of RE,  
Pangbourne College

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### Seeds of Unity



The links between plants, religions and beliefs offer exciting possibilities for learning. To encourage botanic gardens to explore these links, Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) has created an on-line education pack with generous funding from Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. This pack is for educators working in botanic gardens as well as for school teachers, particularly of RE, and the activities are aimed at children 7-11 years of age.

Religion and belief play a significant role in shaping our attitudes towards the environment. Christianity and Islam are noted for separating humans from their surrounding ecosystems with both believing that human beings have been given a responsibility by God/Allah on this earth and that they will be accountable to God for their actions and the trust placed in them. Hinduism, on the other hand, perceives God's presence all around and through nature while Humanism, which makes sense of the world using reason, experience and shared values, believes in the importance of conservation to ensure the best possible future for humanity.

This education pack was created through the expertise of several contributors who are involved in the work of SACREs. They hope it may be recommended for use by various SACREs around the country, not least in areas where there are also botanic gardens open for school visits. See <http://www.bgci.org/education/2542> for details of the activities. Click [here](#) to discover whether there is a botanic garden in your area!

Lesley Prior

## Holocaust Memorial Day 2014



*Many SACREs and SACRE members support schools and other organisations in commemorating Holocaust Memorial Day each year. Sharon Artley gives some information you may find useful for HMD 2014.*

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) is commemorated on 27 January every year, this being the date of the liberation of Auschwitz. (You may wish to be thinking even further ahead to 2015 which will be the 70th anniversary of this event). The theme for HMD 2014 is **Journeys** and how journeys themselves can become part of genocide.

### Resources

- [Holocaust Memorial Day Trust website](#)
- [Theme vision](#)
- [Resource overview page](#)
- [Education resources](#)

Films, podcasts, life stories, book and film reviews, posters and much more – not only for the Holocaust and Nazi persecution, but also subsequent genocides: Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

There are support materials and a [campaign pack](#) as well as a series of [free workshops](#) to help organisers plan meaningful and inspiring activities for HMD. You can also keep up to date by signing up to the [HMDT newsletter](#).

On a personal note, for HMD 2014, I am delighted to be supporting HMDT in the **north east** of England.

If you are a SACRE in this region and would like to tell me about an event you are involved in or helping to organise, would like some support, or just a chat about your ideas or what you are doing, please email me: [North.East@hmd.org.uk](mailto:North.East@hmd.org.uk).

Feel free to give these details to others.

I shall be at the [workshop in Durham](#) on 15th October. I look forward to seeing you there.

Sharon Artley

### Work opportunity

Director of Culham St Gabriel's, Mark Chater says:

"I am looking for someone to do a scoping exercise on the relationships, actual and potential, between teaching and learning in RE, skills in RE, 16 + skill needs, workplace sector skills, apprenticeships and the opinions of employer organisations and political parties. The exercise will include desktop work only: looking at RE documents, national and a sample of local, and exploring websites in the FE world as well as the Institute of Directors, CBI, Chambers of Commerce, small business employers, TUC, and main parties. No telephone calls or interviews will be needed.

This is a short-term consultancy. The exact size, scope and remuneration are flexible and depend partly on availability. However, if successful it could lead to a larger CSTG project in collaboration with others. Any of your members who might be interested is very welcome to contact me about this. If I could ask you to reflect and share this with anyone who you think might be interested, this would greatly help."

If you are interested, please contact Mark: [Mark@cstg.org.uk](mailto:Mark@cstg.org.uk)

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