

Spring 2025

The Fulwood Messenger



**The Magazine of Fulwood Old Chapel
(Unitarian)**

Whiteley Lane, Sheffield S10 4GL



Message from the Chair

Dear All,

I am writing this in January, we have just had a big freeze, and I for one am glad to see the back of the ice and snow.

Perhaps we will have more by the time you read this. Winter proper has only just started. However the nights are getting lighter already and we have been blessed with some lovely sunshine.



Christmas was mild and dry and a godsend for us as we had the family over and could get out every day. We had a lovely Christmas meal in the Three Merry Lads, I wish the pub all the luck in the world, the food and service was great. All that festivity is over for another year and 2025 will be zooming along.

The chapel is constantly being improved, we have a new heating system, a new microphone and perhaps a new zoom set up soon. Thank you to all involved who have made these renovations a reality.

I have a few trips planned for this year, hopefully to warm places, that's the only thing I miss in this country. I am looking forward to spring, already the birds are singing but it will be a while until things start growing properly again. I already want to see some colour. I am constantly amazed at our gardener who does our beautiful garden and the flowers in front of the chapel wall. He manages to make the planting look so easy and there is also lots of colour whatever the time of year.

I wish everyone all the best for 2025. I also wish Underbank in Stannington all the best, as you are probably aware they have lost their minister, Maud. I hope we can support the congregation there and hope the church is still viable going forward.

Jane

Leap Year

by Annette Wynne



Little month of February,
You are small, but worthy—very!
Will you grow up like the others,
Like your sister months and brothers?
Every four years with a bound
With a leap up from the ground,
Trying to grow tall as they—
All you stretch is one small day!
Even then you're not so tall
But just the shortest month of all.

Submissions for the next edition of The Messenger

Thank you to all who contribute
to The Messenger.
Please do send your
articles to me by
14th April 2025, latest. Sue.



Recycling Recycling Recycling Recycling

The early spring edition 2020 edition of The Messenger had a theme 'Are You Ready for What Is To Come? Susie Ince was still writing/editing the Messenger in those days and always had a theme. (I don't, I'm just grateful for what I can get!) Anyway, that edition covered a lot about climate change and saving the planet. Re-cycling features large in our planet saving efforts – and that's what I'm doing here. I've recycled some pieces from that edition. (This has NOTHING to do with the fact that I've had very few items for inclusion this time...)

Rev. Maud Robinson

By the time you read this, Maud will have preached her final sermon at Underbank (January 26th). She will be sadly missed in the District but has decided that it's time to return to Ireland, and who can blame her? Most of us will remember her tales of her extensive travels (and religious experiences) through most of her adult life: now perhaps her roots are pulling her home. In 2020, Maud was our Minister too, and wrote an article for that issue of the Messenger. You might smile at the last line.

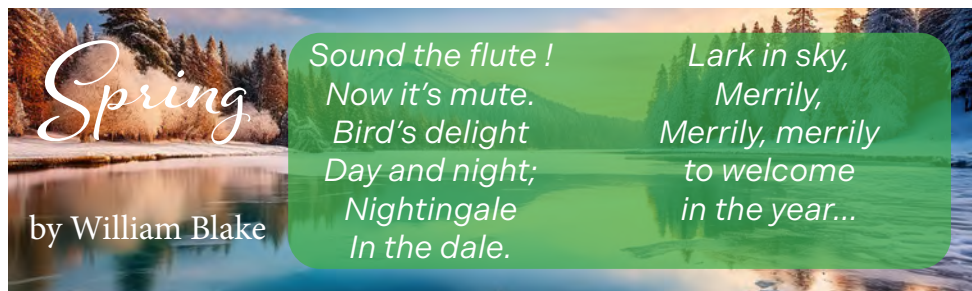
Sheffield School Strike Extinction Rebellion and Me! Some of you might be wondering why I, a minister, have been advocating congregational involvement in the activities of Extinction Rebellion (XR), of which the most visible are public actions, which can cause inconvenience to people going about their daily lives. I'm pretty sure that most, if not all, of us are deeply concerned by the environmental crisis facing our world and are taking measures in our own lives to reduce our energy consumption and be more mindful of the products we consume.

However, I think there is some suspicion about the value and ethics of involving ourselves in the kind of civil disobedience advocated by XR. I wrote an article on this subject for *The Inquirer* in February 2019, shortly

before I took up the position of ministry at Fulwood Old Chapel. Here are some edited excerpts: The very term 'civil disobedience' was, I believe, first used by that great friend of American Unitarians, Henry David Thoreau. Quakers have been 'doing' civil disobedience and getting arrested for it, for years. I am not a natural, banner-waving marcher or protester. I hate marching in parades and such like. However, in 2008 I was the only Unitarian minister in Scotland and took a lead in Unitarian campaigning for Equal Marriage rights for same sex couples and, as we know, the Equal Marriage campaign has now been won. Surely the next concerted campaign for Unitarians nationally should be around the imminent climate catastrophe.

We can all do our personal bit but substantial crisis-averting action needs to be taken at governmental level. I suggest we need to think about whether we are willing to be involved in headline-grabbing civil disobedience, in order to get the attention of legislators. Like me, most of us are probably not natural campaigners. But campaigning isn't for fun, it's serious work which we have to knuckle down to, whether we like it or not, if we are to play any meaningful role in helping to avert the ongoing environmental crisis. (I have fears that I will really regret writing this article, when I am called on to practice what I preach, but don't they say "feel the fear and do it anyway").

I don't know if Maud ever did regret her article ... But I'm glad to include it here!



From Sarah Welsh

March was the first month in the early Roman calendar as it brings the first day of spring with the Spring (vernal) equinox, the start of new beginnings. I like that idea, it seems much more in tune with the rhythms of nature. Making New Year's resolutions in January is too much like hard work. Nature is just getting through these cold, dark winter months, either hibernating or keeping a low profile. It's not making big promises!

So this year I'll make my New Year's resolutions in March, in tune with when nature starts its year. As nature awakens from its winter slumber and green shoots burst out of the ground, so too will I venture out a bit more and have more energy to do things. And with this new approach to New Year's resolutions I might have a chance of seeing them through!

Happy Spring, when it comes, and to starting New Year's resolutions in March.

***Hopefully the snow will be less likely by then too!
Speaking of which...***

There was no Chapel Service this morning, due to the frozen conditions, but this gave an opportunity for some alternative activity. A little voice asked at my bedroom door, 'Do you wanna build a snowman? Come on, let's go and play...'

Rather than saying 'Go away, Anna', I embraced the idea and we made our best ever snowy friend. Anna is a whisker from her 21st birthday and I am well into my 50s, but it seems you're never too old to romp in the snow.

I hope you got the 'Frozen' reference. The photos show our version of Olaf, and Anna making a snow angel in the background.

Best wishes, Judith.





Judith, Olaf and Anna. Good, old fashioned fun.

Another recycled piece – written originally by our lovely Susie Ince.

Keep Calm - and Adapt!

There have been climate changes throughout history. About 90 million years ago (mid-Cretaceous era) studies of foraminifera show that ocean temperatures were the warmest they had been in the past 150 million years with forests and dinosaurs found in both polar regions. This “supergreenhouse” climate was likely to have been caused by massive releases of carbon dioxide and other gases from undersea volcanoes. There have been ice ages and warmer periods throughout history. Ice ages have occurred in a hundred thousand year cycle for the last 700 thousand years, and there have been previous periods that appear to have been warmer than the present despite CO₂ levels being lower than they are now.

More recently, we have had the medieval warm period and the little ice age from 1600 when the Thames froze over and there was panic in Europe because of the advancing glaciers threatening towns and villages. Modern life has been tailored to the somewhat stable climate of the last 2 hundred years. Have we been lulled into a false sense of security? Climate changes are now upon us. However, the faster the climate changes, the harder it will be - and there is the crunch! There have been several times in Earth’s past when Earth’s temperature jumped abruptly, in much the same way as it is doing today.



Those times were caused by large and rapid greenhouse gas emissions, just like humans are causing today. Those abrupt global warming events were almost always highly destructive for life, causing mass extinctions such as at the end of the Permian, Triassic, or even mid- Cambrian periods. The symptoms from those events (a big, rapid jump in global temperatures, rising sea levels, and ocean acidification) are all happening today. Greenhouse gasses – mainly CO₂, but also methane – were involved in

most of the climate changes in Earth's past. When they were reduced, the global climate became colder. When they were increased, the global climate became warmer. When CO₂ levels jumped rapidly, the global warming that resulted was highly disruptive and sometimes caused mass extinctions.

Humans today are emitting prodigious quantities of CO₂, at a rate faster than even the most destructive climate changes in Earth's past It cannot be denied that in part we are destroying the world. When you see creatures strangled and poisoned by discarded plastics, the deforestation, the destruction caused though tsunamis, uncontrollable fires around the world you can't hide your head in the sand and pretend it isn't happening. It is! But we have to face facts - history



has proved that Man is not the cause of climate change. And, like King Canute we must realise Man is unable to stop it! However, we must accept that Man is exacerbating climate change and this we can stop! We have to find ways to adjust our life styles. We also have to adapt and learn to live with climate change and, in doing so, anticipate the inevitable catastrophes and be prepared beforehand to limit the damage that these will cause.

And here from another dear, late, friend:

Pollution and The Elusive Kingfisher

by Roger Newton



In all of the three score and thirteen years of my life expended on this earth, I have never yet seen a Kingfisher. The nearest I came to fulfilling this major bucket list event was some twenty years ago in the Rivelin valley, when quite by chance I glimpsed a flash of turquoise out of the corner of my right eye. Sadly, that was my only encounter. Other people that I know have seen them quite frequently and only last week I was able to talk to a photographer that had seen a Kingfisher and taken

a picture of it some thirty minutes earlier on the Chesterfield Canal, which he very kindly showed me in his digital camera memory. The following day I walked the same stretch of water and didn't encounter this elusive bird.

Why is the Kingfisher so brightly coloured and yet I cannot see one? In terms of performance, the nature programmes that I have watched on television demonstrate a fundamentally sharp eyed, sharp-beaked predator that catches its prey with precise and direct action. I can only begin to imagine how long the evolution of this species took, but it does seem that our pretty little Kingfisher is a perfect development. How further evolution will treat this kind of perfection is a question I cannot answer. When rivers and streams and other natural habits are polluted, principally by man's activities in our world, mother nature takes a

severe beating. I don't have to walk far from my house to observe examples of litter washed down streams and rivers during heavy rainfall, now dangling from the lower branches of trees after the flood has retreated. It is only in recent years that industrial pollution of river water has significantly declined, thus bringing wildlife back to once bleak wasteland.

The more people that inhabit this planet, the worse the problem becomes. Water quality in streams and rivers has improved over recent years, but if we are striving for perfection in all things, perhaps we should start by applying ourselves to our own environment. The ideas are already out there, just waiting for dedicated people to put them to use. Looking around me at our landscape, I see nature reclaiming past remnants of a bygone industrial age. What I would like to see is evidence that there are bright enough sparks in our midst that can do something useful for the environment by recycling old canals, industrial buildings and disused rail tracks. This is not an exhaustive list, but such dormant assets are everywhere in the countryside around us. They just cry out for clever brains to develop them. In the meantime, my search for the kingfisher continues.

Footnote: We are delighted to say that Roger spotted the Kingfisher a week later!

Editor - *I saw a Kingfisher at Aysgarth Falls, when we were on holiday in the Yorkshire Dales – a very long time ago!*

Messenger compositor (Patrick Smith): *I was delighted to see a Kingfisher in Sheffield canal basin several years ago and another, years before that, was pointed out by Peter Woodhouse (Jane Moore's eldest brother), from a small footbridge by the Avon in Salisbury when Peter was showing us the City centre. The kind of experience would I agree, one never forgets.*

Women's League

Is quite a small group of women (and currently one man, more welcome) meeting for a couple of hours or so

each month, typically on the first Monday, at Upper Chapel on Norfolk St. There is easy parking in the chapel forecourt and it is quite near to public transport links. We have a speaker most months and occasionally have an outing. You will be made very welcome if you would like to join us.

Just contact Sue Toulson.

from Caroline Thorpe

*'An individual influences the whole cosmos
with every thought, word and action.
Therefore someone with peace in their heart
naturally radiates peace and harmony
and influences the whole Universe.'*

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

I was doing some clearing the other day and came across this old chapel anniversary photo - it even has Graham on it. I don't know if it would be any use in the messenger. Prize for recognising the most people or for identifying all the ones who still attend.



March comes in like a Lion !



March in the UK is a time for celebrating saints, mothers, and those in need, as well as enjoying food and sports. Some traditions include:

• **St. David's Day:** Celebrated on March 1st, this Welsh holiday honours the life of St. David, the patron saint of Wales.



• **St. Patrick's Day:** Celebrated on March 17th, this day honours St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. It's celebrated with parades, music, food, and shamrocks.



• **Shrove Tuesday:** Also known as Pancake Day, this day is celebrated with eating pancakes and sometimes pancake races. It's the day before Lent begins.



• **British Summer Time:** On the last Sunday of March, the clocks move forward one hour at 1 AM.



• **Crufts:** This dog show is usually held in Birmingham in early March.



• **Charity doles:** March is a time to remember those in need and donate to charities.



Mothering Sunday



When I still had my Mother, I spent each March searching for a Mothering Sunday card, as opposed to Mother's Day, which she regarded as being a commercial occasion



brought from the USA (it is!). Mothering Sunday, also known as Refreshment Sunday, originated in England in the 16th century. It's now a day to honour mothers and other maternal figures, but wasn't always. Mothering Sunday occurs on the fourth Sunday of Lent; a special day when people visited their mother church or cathedral. Don't confuse Mothering Sunday with Mothers' Day; it is only in the last century that this day is associated with showing appreciation to our mums (though people often met up with their mother on return to their original diocese).

Origins

The tradition of visiting the "mother" church dates back to early Christianity. In the Middle Ages, people would visit their "mother" church, which was usually the church where they were baptized. The tradition became more official and was established for the fourth Sunday of Lent. The date of Mothering Sunday changes each year because it's tied to the church calendar.

What people did

People would bring flowers and other offerings to the church. People would relax the austerity of Lent and treat their mothers to edible gifts. Children who were working away would return home for the day. Children would pick wildflowers to take to church or give to their mothers.

What it evolved into

In the Middle Ages, Mothering Sunday evolved into a celebration of the Virgin Mary.



Simnel Cake

It was originally made for the fourth Sunday in Lent, also known as Laetare Sunday, the Refreshment Sunday of Lent (when the 40-day fast would be relaxed), Mothering Sunday, or Simnel Sunday; named after the cake.

A Simnel cake is a type of fruit cake that contains plenty of marzipan and is now eaten at Easter, although it used to be specifically associated with Mothering Sunday. When folk were fasting during Lent, Mothering Sunday, appearing in the middle of the fast, offered a respite from 40 days of religious austerity.



James Petts from London, England, CC BY-SA 2.0 -<<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

Like most British food eaten during winter and early spring, the Simnel cake contains lots of dried fruit, and contains a layer or marzipan both on top and within, and is decorated with eleven marzipan balls, each symbolising Jesus's disciples (minus Judas).

To trace the origin of Simnel cake, you need to go right back to mediaeval times where it began life as a yeast-leavened bread, which may or may not have been enriched. This doesn't sound that much like a special bread, you you may think, but what made it special is that it made out of the highest quality flour possible; simnel derives from the Latin *simila* – the whitest and finest of flours.

Fast forward to the 17th and 18th centuries, and the bread mixture had been swapped for a pudding batter, not dissimilar to spotted dick, enriched with dried fruit, spices and almonds. It would be boiled like a pudding. When cooked, it was wrapped in pastry, glazed with egg and baked until a good hard crust

formed. It would be like the Scottish black bun, a traditional Christmas food north of the border.

It is only when you get to the tail end of the 19th century that it starts to look like something we would recognise as a cake, though surprisingly it is not until the 20th Century that the familiar marzipan layers and decorative disciples appear.

Easter for Unitarians from Sarah Tinker

Easter is the most significant festival in the Christian year. What does it mean for us as Unitarians? How do we respond to the Gospel narratives of Jesus' journey towards Jerusalem, his betrayal, trial, suffering and death? How do we personally mark the path from Good Friday's aching sadness and despair to the hope and joy of Easter Sunday? In most Unitarian congregations these days you'll find a remarkable diversity of attitudes towards Easter. Some Unitarians remain true to our Free Christian origins. They honour Jesus as a supreme example for humanity, a historical figure whose supreme example can guide our living. Others are drawn to the mystical elements of the Easter narrative, to concepts of resurrection and atonement. Another Unitarian response to Easter focusses on the symbolism of resurrection and renewal and how it is expressed in the natural world each springtime, as new life emerges once more from cold, dark earth. This earth centred faith seems ever more relevant as environmental awareness reminds us of the interconnectedness of all life.

There is no single Unitarian doctrine relating to Easter because ours is a non-creedal faith. We do not have 'to think alike to love alike' as an old Unitarian saying goes. We don't have fixed beliefs but we do value highly the opportunity to share and explore our beliefs with others. And we acknowledge that it is not always easy to hear other people's beliefs when they are different from our own. But we're prepared to listen and consider alternative points of view. We Unitarians generally view doubt and 'not-knowing' as part of our spiritual perspective. Some of us hold faith not as a single place at which to arrive, but rather as an on-going journey. So let's join in conversation with our fellow travellers on this shared journey of life and find out more about each other.



WILDFIRES

We have been getting news of wildfires burning in California, encroaching on the urban sprawl of Los Angeles, and making thousands of people homeless in the flaming suburbs. The USA have specially trained smoke jumpers and airborne water scoopers to try to deal with fires of this type, but nevertheless the damage and loss have been widespread - affecting the animal population as well as the human.

The Eaton Fire is an active wildfire burning in the Altadena area of Los Angeles County in Southern California. It began on the evening of January 7, 2025, in Eaton Canyon in the San Gabriel Mountains. As of January 8, 2025, at 10:36 a.m. the fire had spread to approximately 14,117 acres.

We have heard less about fires once again burning in Australia, but residents in an Australian region engulfed by bushfires were given two hours to return home to collect their belongings before Christmas on Tuesday Dec 24, as emergency crews try to contain the blaze. Communities around the Grampians, in Victoria, have been evacuated amid warnings from authorities that conditions there in the days ahead could be the worst since Australia's most severe fire season on record, the so-called "Black Summer" of 2019-20.



Parts of Australia have been on high alert for bushfire danger this summer, following several quieter seasons compared with the 2019-20 fires which were linked to hundreds of deaths and swept across 24 million hectares of land.

The country has reeled from disaster to disaster in recent years, experiencing both record breaking floods and extreme heat, as it feels the effects of climate change.

The fires of 2020 were very much in our minds here in the UK, and were featured in the Messenger of that date.

Our minister, Maud, wrote to Rev Ralph Catts, a retired Unitarian Minister, now living in Melbourne, to enquire what we here in Fulwood could do to help relieve the terrible

suffering there. His reply was quite surprising:

“Sue and I have had several of our friends contact us and express concerns so I am aware that the impact of the scope and intensity of these fires is being felt throughout the world. As a young man I was a bushfire volunteer and I know that the ways we fought fires then will not work now because the intensity of the fires has increased to such a degree that you can no longer be exposed to the fire storm that travels through the air in front of the actual fire.

The increased heat intensity is because the country is much drier and this is because Australia is getting even less rain as climate change intensifies. Also, fires are happening more frequently, and the new growth that follows is predominantly ‘fire loving’ species, which, especially as new growth, burn more intensely than old growth timber. You cannot go anywhere at present without donations for fire victims and for animal welfare.

The size of the donations is incredible and would dwarf anything that UK Unitarians could raise. However, our scientists tell us that intense fire seasons will become more frequent unless we tackle climate change as a pressing problem. What we need most in Australia is a world-wide commitment to tackle climate change as an urgent challenge.”

Ralph subsequently wrote an article for the Messenger:

Living with Catastrophic Fires by Rev. Dr. Ralph Catts

We are aware that the scope and intensity of these fires is being felt throughout the world and several UK friends contact us and express concerns about the impact of the catastrophic Australian fires. There have been disastrous bushfires before in Australia. In 1939, fires caused 71 fatalities and more than 400 homes were destroyed in Victoria. In 2009 on one day there were more than 400 fires and there were 173 human fatalities.

This summer both the scale and duration of the fires is even greater than those past events and could be burning until at least the end of February. Today I was due to play in an over 70s cricket carnival now cancelled due to the level of air pollution caused by the smoke drifting hundreds of miles from the fires. People

with respiratory difficulties are being advised to stay indoors, and players in the qualifiers for the Australian Tennis Open have been affected.

These immediate impacts are, however, minor compared to the widespread longer-term effects of the fires in Australia. Australia has always had a fragile ecology, even when Aboriginal Australians arrived sixty or more thousand years ago, but I know the rainfall patterns across the continent are changing. For the past decade, the annual monsoon in northern Australia has been about 6 weeks late and has delivered less rain. As a young man fifty years ago, I was a bushfire volunteer and I know that the ways we fought fires then will not work now.

Collections for fire victims and for animal welfare are everywhere in Australia and the size of the donations is incredible. So, what if anything can UK communities do to help? Our scientists tell us that intense fire seasons will become more frequent unless we tackle climate change so what we need most is a world-wide commitment to address climate change as an urgent challenge.



And that is where you can help even if it isn't happening in your own back yard! We need to deepen our commitment to our planet and to recognise that we are of the earth and have a sacred duty to the earth to leave it in better shape. It takes the argument beyond the disputes about the evidence and brings us to engage with what all first nation communities know.

This is the interdependency of all sentient beings, and our reliance on the earth as our source of existence. In the words of a Native American proverb, 'Treat the earth well. We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children'. Climate change is affecting peoples, animals and plants across the globe, and the solution has to be global.

However, to reverse the harm done already, all nations must rise to the challenge including the UK. We hope the world-wide attention given to the Australian catastrophe could be a stimulus to a substantial international response. Donations for people and for animals and for the flora affected are welcome, but more action is needed to implement the recommendations of the International

Panel on Climate Change The next international Climate Change Conference is in Glasgow later in 2020. Can UK Unitarians support and help to mobilise the demands for the UK to press all nations for greater efforts? Lead by local action placing pressure on local politicians. If Sheffield can take the lead now, other cities might follow.

Occasional Sunday Conversations

from Sarah Tinker

Sundays 2nd March and 6th April – bring a sandwich and join a conversation after our service from **12.30-2pm**. These sessions are open to everyone.

If you still feel quite new to Unitarianism or this chapel then bring your questions, your observations, your doubts and your certainties. If this chapel has long been your spiritual home maybe you'd like to tell us what is important about Unitarianism and this community for you.

We'll have some simple conversation starters to guide our talking in pairs and small groups and these will be available to think about in advance if you're someone who likes to think before you talk. These conversations connect with some reading and writing exercises congregation members are engaging with in the spring. Do get in touch if you'd like to know more by emailing

sarahtinker54@gmail.com



**“Use it up,
wear it out,
make it do,
or do without”**

New England proverb

NEWS

I have heard from Sue Hedges, a longtime supporter of the Mill House Sanctuary in the valley. (It has now relocated)

Just letting you know of the shock news I had from Pat at the Sanctuary. Francis Cutler, Jane's long time partner at the Mill House, died on Sunday morning 5th January. Many people in the area will have known Francis, as from leaving school, he used to work at the garage on Old Fulwood Road: his childhood family home was up Brooklands Avenue.

Our thoughts are with Jane and the family.



Providing a combination of modern and traditional education to young people from Spiti and other underdeveloped tribal areas in the Indian Himalaya.

Newsletter extracts: The education projects in Spiti

Dear Friends of Spiti,

Please enjoy the attached newsletter for this winter from the Rinchen Zangpo Society for Spiti Development. It has been another solid year of achievement for their education programme. High academic achievement and a well rounded education for all, with Spiti's special minority culture to the fore. Thank you for all your contributions over the year, financial or otherwise, to that programme. A brief round-up of the activities of our UK charity, Aid for Himalayan Education, will be sent out shortly after the accounts for 2024 have been finalized. Happy reading.

Best wishes for a Happy New Year

Graham Woodhouse

Chairperson, Aid for Himalayan Education

Ed. I can't reproduce the whole of the extensive newsletter here, but here are highlights.

The Society has approximately 970 students in its care, ages ranging all the way from kindergarten to senior secondary school. From that number, for eight to qualify to train as doctors this year, is that not a remarkable achievement? Seven of the eight spent their whole school career at Munsel-ling and six of the eight did their medical school entrance examination coaching year at Munsel-ling as well. One, Tenpa Dhargyal, is a Tibetan, not a Spitian.

Taking with them all our best wishes, I am sure, seven have gone to government medical colleges in their home state of Himachal Pradesh and one, Tenzin Lekcho, has travelled south to Telengana State.

This year the medical exam coaching class at Munsel-ling has evermore students. The NEET challenge is seriously in fashion! NEET—National Entrance cum Eligibility Test, the all-India entrance exam for undergraduate medical programmes.

Here are the future physicians:



Ringzin Dolma



Tenzin Namgial



Tenpa Dhargyal



Tenzin Zomkit



Sonam Chhukit



Tenzin Lekcho



Tenzin Chhekrit



Tenzin Lhadon

More amazing support

Our government supply of electricity comes from hydro power. The supply is not always reliable and becomes much reduced in winter in freezing conditions. For our students to study in the dark evenings and so forth a generator is necessary. Our old generator came to the end of its working life. Mrs Sally Ann Muir came to our rescue and donated the money for a new 'ecofriendly' generator for our school. We are very grateful for her help. We are also grateful to Diana Petrenko for donating books for our school and to a bikers' group from an Indian travel company, A.B. Company. They have visited us regularly on tour in the summer. This year they donated for two washing machines and gave some general donations too. Great thanks to these people and many more who have helped. We are looking after almost a thousand children's education now so our budget is indeed high.



The generator

Visit by the State Minister for Tribal Affairs and our MLA

The Minister for Tribal Affairs for Himacha Pradesh, Jagat Singh Negi and our district's new member of the HP State Legislative Assembly (MLA) Anuradha Rana made a tour through Spiti and we welcomed them to Munsel-ling School. Even though our schools are run as an independent charity and are not part of the state education system, still we receive significant financial support from the state government in appreciation of our contribution to tribal and young people's development, so these visits are important to us and we thank all concerned officials for their continued support.



Jagat Singh Negi and Anuradha Rana are warmly received at Munsel-ling

Climate Change



Once again, supporters of German Aid for Tibetans (GAT) have been very generous and with their help we have given our original, historic, building a metal sheet roof. It was in this building in 1996 that HH the XIVth Dalai Lama inaugurated Munsel-ling School, our first educational venture in Spiti itself. It was constructed with our traditional flat roof, made from mud laid over a wooden support. Climate change is challenging the traditional forms of Spitian and Tibetan architecture. Increasing rainfall in summer causes many problems, water leakage down the ground floor, de-stabilizing mud buildings even to the point of collapse. A metal roof will be much safer and eliminate the need to clear the snow off every time it falls.

Annual School Function



Our honoured guest at this year's annual function was former Minister of Tribal Affairs, Phunchog Rai (centre, with white hat)

School Student Statistics, 2024:

Munsel-ling School, Rangrik
Kaza Public School, Kaza
Rewa Primary School, Rongtong
New Nalanda Pre and Primary School, Chango

Total 979 happy students!

Mixed boarders and day students.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to our education programme this year. Great apologies to anyone we have forgotten. Apart from those already mentioned above we extend special thanks to:

**Zoe Maogany, France ■ Jackie Bushe, Ireland
The Reifenberg Trust, UK ■ Jaqueline & friends, France
Nantwich Buddhist Group ■ Upper Chapel, Sheffield, UK
Fulwood Old Chapel, Sheffield, UK ■ Michel & Friends, France**

Glimpses of School Life



Clockwise from top left: 1) a wind gust makes a smokey stove; 2) prayer time; 3) torch light parade on Losar, Spiti New Year, 2nd December, 2024; 4) school dinner with rice and lentils.



Contacts

For personalised ceremonies and hire of the Chapel or Old Schoolroom,
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Caroline Thorpe 0114 281 8337 carolinthorpe54@gmail.com

Safeguarding Officers

Caroline Thorpe 0114 281 8337 carolinthorpe54@gmail.com

and Peter Rowson 0114 236 5894 janetpeterrowson@gmail.com

Services and Service Leaders

*Services begin at 11.00 unless otherwise stated, and finish around noon.
Everyone is welcome to share tea and coffee and conversation afterwards.*

We do not take an offertory at our services.

February:

- 2nd - Mrs Sue Toulson
- 9th - Mr Ed Fordham
- 16th - Mr Peter Rowson
- 23rd - Rev. Maria Pap

March:

- 2nd - Rev Sarah Tinker
- 9th - Mr Ed Fordham
- 16th - Mrs Philippa Shewry
- 23rd - Rev. Maria Pap
- 30th - Mr Robert Ince

April:

- 6th - Rev. Sarah Tinker
- 13th - Mrs Jane Moore
- 20th - Easter – Mr Ed Fordham
- 27th - Rev. Andi Phillips

May:

- 4th - Mr Peter Rowson
- 11th - Mr Ed Fordham
- 18th - Sheffield & District service at Doncaster
led by Rev. Jeffrey Bowes
- 25th - TBA