



United Nations Association Norwich & District Branch September 2012 Newsletter

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the September newsletter. The image opposite is Picasso's "War and Peace" and it serves as an introduction to a fascinating lecture that UNA are co-hosting on Tuesday 11 September at 7pm in the Friends Meeting House (details below). I would also like to tell you about a very special talk – the inaugural David Roberts Memorial Lecture – on Saturday 20th October at 11.00am in the Curve at the Forum (details below). The talk will be given by Lord Phillips of Sudbury. Please do try to come.

With best wishes, Marguerite Finn – Newsletter Editor.



Lunchbox meetings all take place in the Friends Meeting House, Upper Goat Lane, Norwich. Each talk starts at 1pm and lasts about 45 minutes. You are welcome to bring a packed lunch any time from 12.15pm. Hot drinks/biscuits are available. Donations of £2.00 are welcome to cover expenses.

Don't forget our Lunch Box talks are usually on the third Friday of the month:

Friday 21st September

Branch AGM followed at 1pm by Lucy Atkinson of the British Red Cross who will talk about the *Red Cross Refugee Project*

Friday 16th November

Julian Bryant from Christian Aid will talk about *Corporate Tax Dodging*

Friday 21st December

Julian Wright will talk about *Water Aid*

Other dates for your diary:

Tuesday 11th September

UNA and Norwich Stop the War Coalition are hosting an illustrated talk on Picasso entitled "**Picasso: Peace and Freedom – the Battle for Picasso's Mind 1945-1973**". The talk will be given by Professor Lynda Morris from the Norwich University College of the Arts and will be held in the Friends Meeting House in Upper Goat Lane, Norwich. **It will start at 7pm.** This is a unique opportunity to see and hear Professor Morris's research into this fascinating artist and this period. Not to be missed! Admission is Free.

Thursday 11th October

UNA Stall on the Market at Hay Hill. There will be books and CDs and bric-a-brac to tempt you, so please do come and visit the stall.(9am – 3pm) If you have any goods to donate, please bring them to the stall on the day, if possible. Otherwise call Marguerite on 01603-722880.

Saturday 20th October

the inaugural lecture of the David Roberts Annual Memorial Lectures will take place on Saturday 20th October at 11.00am in the Curve at the Forum. The Lecture will be given by Lord Phillips of Sudbury and will be entitled: "**Can the UN Survive, Let Alone Thrive, if the Public is Indifferent to it?**"

Lord Phillips of Sudbury is a Liberal Democrat peer. He became a Lord in 1998

Notes on the John Aves Educational Project

At the AGM, it is customary for the Norwich and District Branch of UNA to agree to give a donation to a local charity or project. At last years AGM we decided to give a donation to the John Aves Educational Project and I would like to tell you a little bit more about that project. The John Aves Educational Project seeks to empower disadvantaged young people to fulfil their potential through educational achievement in order for them to better serve their community. The Rev'd Canon Dr John Aves was visiting the Holy Land in 2003/2004 as part of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), when tragically, he died suddenly in Bethlehem on 25 January 2004. But his vision of hope for the future continues through the Project. The Project works with universities in the Holy Land to identify deserving students from Dheisheh Refugee Camp capable of making a positive impact and to fund these students in their studies for three years. It also explores links with other communities in the Holy Land to ensure that the most appropriate students are identified. Because the Project offers sponsorship over a period of years, it has to ensure that there are sufficient funds to cover the entire period. Therefore it is looking to have more regular donors and even £3 a month will make a positive difference. Typical University tuition fees for one year in the Holy Land are £1,200. The more funds that can be secured, the more young students can be supported. For further information or to donate to the Project, please contact the Chairman by e-mailing info@jaep.org.uk The website can be found at www.jaep.org.uk

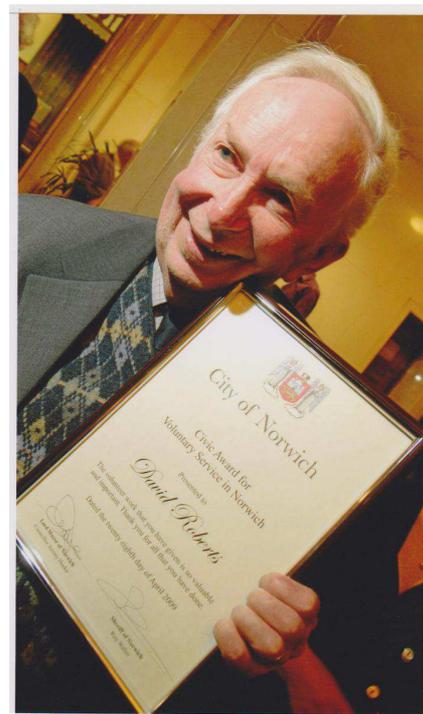
Obituary : David Roberts (1930-2012)

A stalwart member of United Nations Association died in Norwich on 10th May 2012.

David Noël Roberts was born on 4th January 1930 in Arundel, Sussex.

He Moved to Norwich in 1968, and quickly became an active force in working on third world issues. He helped form the Norwich World Poverty Action Group, a founding group of the World Development Movement. He was co-opted by Norwich Christian Aid Commission in 1969, raising its public profile by media events, and saw Christian Aid Week collections in the city grow from £550 that year to over £45,000 annually.

In 1972 he was invited to become the first secretary of the Third World Centre, the earliest local development education centre in Britain (now Norfolk Education and Action for Development). He was its secretary for 25 years, and a Trustee for 21 years. In this role he developed networks with like-minded groups locally, and helped to found the Development Education Association nationally with some 30 younger development education centres. He introduced Tearcraft and Traidcraft fairly-traded goods to Norwich, and persuaded others to become voluntary sales representatives.



Representing the Third World Centre, he was co-opted to the Norwich Branch of the United Nations Association in 1974, and has served it as press officer, Branch Chairman, Branch Secretary, and editor of its newsletters. One of David's tasks, which he enjoyed very much, was that of Programme Secretary – which meant finding speakers for the monthly LunchBox meetings. He could always be relied on to know of someone well-informed to speak on whatever country or topic the Committee thought would be interesting to Members. David's knowledge of the United Nations was encyclopaedic. He could answer any question put to him about the UN – and his particular fund of knowledge is irreplaceable.

He served for several years as Vice-Chairman of UNA Eastern Region (covering from Southend to Northampton and Lincoln) and was its Regional Secretary from 2002 to 2009.

As regional representative on the Board of the World Development Movement for five years, he mounted a series of training days in East Anglia on working with local media. He organised two coaches full of local people to lobby Parliament in 1981, pressing for increased Overseas Aid. With Jubilee 2000 he helped to organise coaches to the G8 Summit in Birmingham in 1998 and to London in 1999 prior to the G8 meeting in Cologne, pressing for debt relief for least developed countries.

He represented the United Reformed Church on the Executive of Norwich Council of Churches for 30 years and drafted its constitution when it reformed as Churches Together in Greater Norwich. In 1998 he helped lay the foundations for a Norwich Inter-Faith Link, on guidelines by the national Inter-Faith Network; and, when the Link was formally constituted in 2001, he was elected among its first officers. He held office in the Link until 2009. David was nominated to receive a Civic Award from the Lord Mayor of Norwich in 2009, for services to the community.

Tributes have come in from all sides about David and his hard work and enthusiasm. **Lady Enid Ralphs** – a founder member of the Norwich Branch of UNA and a Vice-president - said in her moving tribute: “David, my friend and colleague for so many years was a stalwart. He won our love and respect. He was always faithful to any cause to which he put his hand. The Norwich and District Branch of UNA has suffered a major blow and will have a serious challenge in carrying on without him.”

The Branch *will* keep going because of the ground rules David laid down but we shall miss his quiet support and wisdom and perhaps most of all, we will miss our dear friend.

David leaves Connie, his wife for almost fifty years, their son Mark and daughter Clare. `

In recognition of David Robert’s lifelong work for UNA and international issues, the Norwich Branch of UNA has agreed to hold an annual lecture in his memory. The first of these lectures will take place on Saturday 20th October 2012 and will be given by Lord Phillips at The Curve in the Forum at 11am. Lord Phillips will speak to the title: "*Can the UN survive, let alone thrive, if the public is indifferent?*"

UN Forum 2012 – Bringing the UN to the UK

On the 14th July, I attended the UN Forum 2012 at the Institute of Education in London. This was the largest civil society gathering on the United Nations in the UK this year. It was organised by UNA-UK and was an opportunity for people from all walks of life to come together and discuss some of the most pressing challenges facing the world today – from intractable conflicts to sustainable development.

The Forum was well attended by people of all ages. The Opening Session was conducted by Sir Jeremy Greenstock GCMG, Chairman of UNA-UK and former UK Ambassador to the UN. The Keynote Speech was given by Lord Malloch-Brown former UN Deputy Secretary-General. His topic was “What next for the UN?” As well as a Plenary Session in the morning and afternoon, the day was divided into five simultaneous panel sessions. The themes of these panels were:

- Panel 1: The Olympic Truce – can we turn a fine ideal into a living reality?
- Panel 2: Seven billion people – challenge or opportunity?
- Panel 3: Can we get to nuclear zero?
- Panel 4: Does it still make sense to talk about ‘universal’ human rights?
- Panel 5: Where will the UN take you?

I would have liked to attend all of them! But unfortunately one could only attend one of the panels and I chose to attend the one called “Seven Billion People – Challenge or Opportunity? Because the subject of Population interests me very much.

The speakers for this particular panel were:

- David Nussbaum – CEO WWF-UK;
- Alison Marshall – Public Affairs Director UNICEF-UK;
- Sara Parkin OBE – Founder of *Forum for the Future*;
- Janet Riessman – Communications Director, Women & Population, UN Foundation.

Of all the speakers, I was most impressed by Sara Parkin. She spoke passionately about the need to educate women in the developing world on birth control and access to contraception. The issue of birth control is linked to population growth, which is inevitably linked to sustainability and climate change. The much-heralded Rio+20 Earth Summit did not include a session on population growth, which was a glaring omission and is a huge backslide from Rio 20 years ago, when Secretary-General Maurice Strong said bluntly: “Either we reduce our population voluntarily, or nature will do it for us brutally”. As a species we think that we have – or will have - the technology to solve the problems of population growth and climate change. This is an arrogant and foolish pretension. The reality is far more complicated. Sara Parkin has this to say: “Currently, rich countries are alone in showing a rise in average family size. With a disproportionate impact on the environment, this puts them on fragile ecological, moral and diplomatic territory. A child born in Europe accounts for 11 times more greenhouse gas emissions than one born in Africa; for North America, the figure is 24 times. (These do not include ‘offshore’ emissions embedded in imports.) **Ultimately, it is clear that, with increasing pressure on key resources, such as land, food and water, everywhere, planning our family is a personal responsibility, as well as a global dilemma.**” She also points out that: “The UN has three projections for the global population in 2100: High = 16 billion; Medium = 10 billion (we are roughly on track for this); Low = 6 billion . And the lower projection of 1 billion people fewer than there are now is achievable”.

“This is a target that could be met simply by responding to the two hundred plus million couples around the world who say they want contraceptives to help plan their family but can’t get them, and by ensuring new generations get the information and contraceptives they need to plan their future families. There are countries with hugely successful programmes to learn from. Thailand, for example, has achieved lower birth rates without any sort of coercion, as has Iran, a country not often cited as an exemplar of world leadership. Above all we need to talk about the numbers of people and our demography as we plan for the future. Any hopes of ending environmental degradation, meeting the Millennium Development Goals, creating resilient communities and economies, and building trusted governance systems will be dashed unless there are fewer of us in the future than there are now. If we can’t do that by bringing down birth rates thoughtfully and carefully, then we shouldn’t be surprised if rising death rates do it for us. At all levels the crisis is a humanitarian one. The solutions are known, are cheap, and come with many collateral benefits”. (www.forumforthefuture.org/projects/growing-pains.)

They may well be, but the political will to achieve them must be there too – and I leave you with the stark statement of Roger Martin, Chair of *Population Matters*. Reporting on the Earth Summit, he said: “I had to conclude that governments basically don’t care if the planet collapses under us in 20 years time. Their concerns are to get re-elected by providing short-term growth that unsustainable growth capitalism has persuaded us to demand. This raises the hugely challenging question of the tension between sustainability and democracy. The only solution is to persuade electorates to demand more sustainability and less consumption – easier said than done, when politics and the media are unanimously desperate for growth”. (www.populationmatters.org/)

*If you would like to contribute anything to our Branch Newsletter, please send to the editor:
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Thank You for Reading Our Newsletter !