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In Praise of Walking

Professor Shane O'Mara p5

5 **In Praise of Walking**
Professor Shane O'Mara

7 **Brexit Without the Bull**
Gavin Esler

10 **Christian and Muslim Intolerance**
Selina O'Grady

14 **Bloomsbury Festival**
at Conway Hall

18 **Not Just A Refugee**
photographic exhibition

22 **Fun Palaces**
Hazel East



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IN THIS ISSUE

3 **Vision, Values and Mission**
Dr Jim Walsh

5 **In Praise of Walking: The New Science of How We Walk and Why it's Good for Us**
Professor Shane O'Mara

7 **Brexit Without the Bull**
Gavin Esler

10 **A History of Christian and Muslim Intolerance and Beyond**
Selina O'Grady

14 **Bloomsbury Festival: Small Steps, Big Ideas**

16 **90 Years at Conway Hall**
Alicia Chilcott

18 **Not Just a Refugee: A photographic exhibition**
Adiam Yemane

22 **Fun Palaces — Community, Creativity and Adventures**
Hazel East

26 **Obituary**
Donald Rooum

27 **Upcoming Events**

Please see the *Ethical Record* section of conwayhall.org.uk for regularly updated content, additional articles and also take a look at the online archive, where every issue published since 1895 is available in digital form.

We regret that Olwen Terris' article on Dr Harry Stopes-Roe in the Oct-Nov-Dec *Ethical Record* was published along with the text from her article from the Jul-Aug-Sep issue on The Emerson Bust – we apologise for any confusion caused. To read Olwen's article as it was intended, please see the revised pdf for the Oct-Nov-Dec edition on Conway Hall's website: conwayhall.org.uk/ethical-record/issue/vol-124-no-4-oct-nov-dec-2019/.

The views expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of the Society. Cover photo by Jazz Borquez on Unsplash. Registered Charity No. 1156033. Founded in 1793, the Society is a progressive movement whose Charitable Objects are: the advancement of study, research and education in humanist ethical principles.

EDITORIAL

Vision, Values and Mission

Dr Jim Walsh

For any organisation encapsulating one's vision, values and mission is of immense importance, but also incredibly challenging. One has to set the tone, entice interest, ensure one can live up to declarations and also distil the enormity of one's activities, hopes and aspirations. No small task! We embarked on this task several months ago. And, following a terrific amount of work behind the scenes, we have arrived at our new vision, values and mission:

- Conway Hall is where ethics matter — **our vision.**
- Creative, Diverse, Historic, Human and Kind — **our values.**
- Curating, supporting and facilitating people and ideas that make ethics matter in the world — **our mission.**

The reaffirmation of ourselves as an “ethical” society seems deceptively simple in its result, but it is one that arrives out of a depth of self-understanding across all those involved. Discussions and questions surrounding who we think we are, why we matter, what we would miss if Conway Hall vanished overnight were all considered, alongside issues of language and semantics. *Do radical and free-thought have the same meaning now as they once had when Conway Hall was built? How should we capture the breadth and depth of our programming? Are we a heritage organisation? Are we a cultural institution? Should we prioritise education? Is learning a better term? What about Humanism? How do the Sunday Concerts fit in?*

To address these questions and develop the results involved public consultation, Trustee and staff workshops, external consultation, plus a huge amount of data gathering, analysis, interpretation and assessment. All of which culminated in a specialist-led workshop to identify the critical ingredients to be given to a smaller working group to make the final judgements.

So, why ethics? Why re-state what is already obvious? **We are already Conway Hall Ethical Society.** One reason was the very real need to balance our heritage with a clear drive towards contemporary culture. To deliver “Conway Hall is where ethics matter” means to engage and position ourselves in the now and demonstrate our relevance to our audiences, communities and public. Such a lofty ideal might appear overly aspirational. However, please take a moment to think about what underpins any consideration of ethics and relevance to audiences, communities and the public. For me — and here comes the declaration — matters of ethics are in every arena of human endeavour. I have a list of these arenas and am willing to share/discuss, obviously. More importantly than my list, though, is the ever-growing list that everyone else has. Individuals, charities, institutions and organisations, in all forms, are talking about and prioritising ETHICS. Ethics matter. So, what better re-statement could we, as an ethical society, make than “Conway Hall is where ethics matter”? In recognition that we are at the start of a conversation, I welcome all thoughts on this issue and will do my utmost to respond.



As well as being the Chief Executive Officer of Conway Hall, **Dr Jim Walsh** has written a blog — *Ethics Starts With You* — on what it is to be human and have humanity. In particular, Jim focuses on how compassion, ethics and wisdom act as guiding aspirations across three essential principles: self-awareness, other-awareness and self-development. To contact him, email ceo@conwayhall.org.uk.

In Praise of Walking: The New Science of How We Walk and Why it's Good For Us

Professor Shane O'Mara

You're a bit overweight, and your blood sugar and cholesterol levels are a little high. You need to shift the weight and get the blood sugar and cholesterol under control. What do you do? Reach for a pill?

You're very busy, a little too stressed, and have a difficult and knotty problem to deal with. You need to focus on the problem, but find you can't. What do you do? Reach for a pill?

You're worried your memory isn't as good as it used to be. And you're always tired, and you're not sleeping properly. What do you do? Reach for a pill?

We'd all like a shortcut for helping brain and body to perform better, stronger, faster, longer. But we all want a shortcut that is safe, reliable and easy to administer. This shortcut should provide the rhythmic uptime and downtime brain and body alike adore and need. Too often we think the shortcut should be a pill, because pills are quick and easy to take. Some people even think it will be some sort of 'smart pill', designed to enhance your mental function. Or, perhaps, it might be the new 'brain training' game. However, all the evidence shows smart pills and brain training games just don't work.

We need to look elsewhere for the shortcut – and there is such a shortcut. One of the simplest and proven methods to enhance your performance, to enhance how you feel, to enhance your memory, to enhance your reaction times, to slow down brain and muscle aging, is available to us all. It is a shortcut easily overlooked at any age. This shortcut is not a pill. It is not a game delivered by your smartphone, tablet or computer screen. This shortcut promises and delivers an endless supply of unique and uplifting experiences. This simple and surprising method is: walking – our wonderful and overlooked adaptation. Walking is like a human superpower – we walked out of Africa, and walking allowed us to conquer the whole world.

We all too easily overlook the gains from lots of regular walking for our health, mood, and clarity of mind. We now live in a deeply unnatural environment, spending long periods sitting, focused on screens. When we sit, the weight of our body trunk concentrates on the lower back, and especially on the coccyx (or tailbone). Little wonder, lower back pain is such a common ailment. And what a great surprise, the remedy – to regularly stand up and walk about – is so little understood or practiced. When we stand up, walk around and move about, our brain and body become animated. Our posture forms a vertical line from the back of our heads, down the spine to our hips, and thence to the ground. Our breathing changes, and quiescent electrical rhythms come alive in the brain.

Lots of regular, high tempo, walking confers many health benefits. We all should know walking is good for heart health. However, lots of regular, high-tempo walking provides many other benefits. Walking is good for gut health, helping the passage of food through the intestines. Regular, up-tempo, walking acts as a brake on the aging of our brains. Walking facilitates creativity, improves mood, and sharpens our thinking. Aerobic exercise after learning actually enhances recall. Reliable, regular exercise produces new cells in the part of the brain concerned with learning and memory (the 'hippocampal formation'). It also stimulates the production of molecules in the brain that assist in brain plasticity.

Walking is a marvellous feat robots cannot emulate with the fluidity of humans and other animals. Walking makes us social, freeing our hands for gestures – hand movements signalling meaning to others. Walking allows us to hold hands, sending signals to others of our exclusive romantic involvement; walking on two legs frees our hands for tools, carrying children, food, even weapons of war. Marching, walking in protest, is a common feature of our free political lives, and something autocrats prevent, because of the threat to

“One of the simplest and proven methods to enhance your performance, to enhance how you feel, to enhance your memory, to enhance your reaction times, to slow down brain and muscle aging, is available to us all.”

Brexit Without the Bull

Gavin Esler

Napoleon Bonaparte once wryly observed that history “is a set of lies agreed upon.” There will come a time when Britain’s current struggles with leaving the European Union will result in historical essays on Brexit and perhaps a learned book or two. But historians will find it difficult to agree on any set of “lies” or “truths” when they look back over current events in Britain. We cannot agree on “truth” right now. This disagreement about truth and lies, facts and fiction, extends from politicians at the very top of governments to ordinary people.

European Union leaders and diplomats made it clear at various points this year they did not believe Britain’s prime minister Boris Johnson. The Court of Session in Scotland suggested that Mr Johnson may not have been entirely truthful in proroguing parliament to get on with his exciting crime fighting agenda. Some 70% of British people told pollsters Ipsos More they didn’t believe him either. When I appeared on Irish Radio recently the first question from the presenter was “do you believe the prime minister of your country?”

I have been travelling around the United Kingdom speaking to diverse groups about the future of Europe and the future of Brexit. Most of these public meetings are fun. Some are truly inspiring, but a few are a puzzle. Conway Hall is a famous London landmark, historically a venue of civilised debate on ethical issues. I spoke there on “The Normalisation of Lies in Public Life” (although my talk title was changed to “Brexit Without the Bull”). We all tell lies, occasionally, and we know it is wrong, yet sometimes we do it so as not to cause offence.

“Yes,” we say, “I loved that shirt you gave me for my birthday.” Or, “yes, your new hairstyle suits you.”

We are also often not truthful when purchasing something online when forced to tick a box showing we have read the “Terms & Conditions.” Have you ever read the Terms & Conditions? Me neither. I cannot ever remember reading thousands of words of T&C legalese.

At the Conway Hall meeting, when talking about lying in public life, I was asked a question by a woman who said she had voted for Brexit in the referendum of 2016. When



someone says “I voted for Brexit” I always ask which version of Brexit they voted for, since even after three and a half years we still cannot agree what Brexit means.

“I voted for a ‘clean Brexit,’” the woman said confidently, explaining that meant “leaving the European Union with No Deal on October 31st.”

Unfortunately almost every part of that sentence was impossible.

The words “clean Brexit” only became fashionable after a book of that title was published in August 2018, not when we voted two years earlier. Moreover the words “clean Brexit” have no real meaning, rather like previous Brexit slogans of having deals called Canada Plus, Norway Plus or Managed No Deal. Once you add in the word “Plus” or “Managed” to any “deal” it can mean anything you want it to mean. But the woman could not have voted as she believed for other reasons too. “No Deal” was never an option on the 2016 Brexit ballot paper. Prominent politicians wanting Brexit - Nigel Farage, Michael Gove and Boris Johnson - explicitly stated that Britain would leave the European Union with a deal, and generally (they claimed) a very good deal because, as they put it “we hold all the cards.” Finally — and most obviously — in June 2016 no date was fixed for leaving the EU, so the woman could not possibly have voted to leave on October 31, 2019. That date was only fixed in March 2019, and even now it may not happen.

their power that co-ordinated walking en masse implies.

Movement – the output of the brain’s activity – changes the dynamics of the brain itself. Movement is central to the ongoing activity of the brain: it changes, augments, enhances that activity. Recent experiments show that walking increases the strength of the signals in parts of the brain concerned with seeing and other senses, such as touch. This is the biological reality of the phrase “on the prowl” – walking about – helps you discover things more quickly compared to merely sitting in one place.

We naturally think of walking as combining seeing and moving. We see, we work out where we want to go, and we walk there. However, people who are completely visually-impaired – even from birth – can walk, and can walk with purpose and direction. How can the visually-impaired do this? Those of us with normal sight are fooled by our sense of the three-dimensional spatial world as visual. In fact, as far as the brain is concerned vision is merely one sense contributing to our understanding of space – an important one – but just one. And we know this because we can find our way around familiar and unfamiliar environments in the darkness. The brain has a highly-developed, GPS-like system for understanding our three-dimensional world, and we now have a good understanding of this system, and how it works. The brain’s GPS system is distributed across multiple brain regions, and consists of

“Movement is central to the ongoing activity of the brain: it changes, augments, enhances that activity.”

brain cells that signal your position in space (‘place’ cells); cells that signal where you are heading (‘head direction’ cells); cells that signal the presence of borders, boundaries and perimeters; cells that provide a metric for space (‘grid’ cells).

Most humans now live in towns and cities. Most walking, now and in the future, will therefore be urban. However, in far too many cities, managing vehicle flow is one of the principal tasks of the urban planner. Worse than this, pedestrians are managed to ensure vehicle flow. And ensuring our cities are walkable for all is merely an afterthought. We need our cities to be walkable ones, for all our sakes. We now spend most of our waking and sleeping time in cars, buses, trains, and buildings. We spend relatively little time with wind and

natural light on our faces. This happens because of the design of our built environment, unless we design nature and walking into our urban world. There are well-known systematic differences in mental health between sterile urban environments, and those that aren’t. “Leafy suburbs” are objects of derision and desire. Derision, because they are stereotyped as staid and dull; but desire, because the green spaces, trees, and grass induce positive mood states easily and quickly. And leafy suburbs come at a premium price.

“Footpaths often seem like secondary thoughts for urban planners, despite the fact that in terms of sheer volume, measured in persons per second, or per metre, footpaths often carry substantially greater numbers of pedestrians”

Footpaths often seem like secondary thoughts for urban planners, despite the fact that in terms of sheer volume, measured in persons per second, or per metre, footpaths often carry substantially greater numbers of pedestrians than the adjacent road carries cars. Stand at a busy city centre junction for a moment: count the cars passing through during a single traffic light cycle. Now, turn your back to the road: count the pedestrians for the same traffic light cycle. And you will often find footpaths carry more pedestrians than roads carry cars. And yet for some unspoken reason, crowding us together on footpaths seems ok. It’s not. Pedestrians and the mobility-impaired need better, wider, easier footpaths. We need to think much more radically: removing on-street parking, restricting vehicle flow in favour of leg-powered movement (and, of course, massively-expanded public transport). We have to stop pretending that we can pour litres of cars into the pint-pots that are our towns and cities.

Walking is good for the body, good for the brain, and good for society at large. The converse is also true. We pay the price for our lack of movement through the slow seizing-up of our bodies and brains, irrespective of whether our static, sedentary living arises because of our desk-bound office jobs, or our tendency to couch potato-dom. We all need to start walking again, and we all should start walking again. We, and our societies, will be much, much the better for it.

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The puzzle is how a decent, articulate human being like this voter could so profoundly delude herself about easily checkable facts. Perhaps it is a tiny example of a phenomenon which is known more grandly as “historical negationism.” It means humans give accounts of the past by selectively (and sometimes deliberately) ignoring or denying troublesome facts which undermine their case. On the day I had the discussion in Conway Hall, British newspapers began running extracts of the autobiography of the prime minister who got us into the Brexit mess in the first place — David Cameron. His “factual” account of our recent history did not please either side in the Brexit debate. The Brexit supporting tabloid newspaper *The Sun* called it “Mills and Boon for Remainers,” referring to a particularly soppy kind of fantasy love story. A newspaper in the Remain camp, *the Guardian*, excoriated Cameron for a self-serving account pretending that the

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referendum mess for which he was responsible was really “a ‘boon’ for Britain if the Leavers’ dastardly tactics hadn’t stopped him from getting his message across to the great British public.” Mr Cameron’s account avoids the uncomfortable fact that until he forced a referendum upon us in 2016 membership of the EU was an issue of no concern to the vast majority of the British people. He led a woeful campaign and he lost.

The term “historical negationism” was coined in 1987 by the French writer Henry Rousso to describe histories of the Nazi Occupation and the puppet Vichy government in World War Two France. Rousso argued that many of these accounts ignored what the French call “collabos” - French men and women who collaborated with the Nazis and helped enable the deportation of Jewish citizens to the death camps. The British historian Sir Richard Evans was called to give evidence in another very famous case of wartime “historical negationism,” that of David Irving. Irving was described as a “Holocaust denier” by the American historian, Deborah Lipstadt, and he sued her for libel. Thanks in part to Sir Richard Evans, Lipstadt won the case and Irving has been utterly discredited. Sir Richard argued that “reputable and professional historians do not suppress parts of quotations from documents that go against their own case, but take them into account, and, if necessary, amend their own case, accordingly.”

“It’s not only historians who sometimes fail to “take into account” facts and documents which undermine their own views or prejudices.”

These words should resonate in our political debates of today. It’s not only historians who sometimes fail to “take into account” facts and documents which undermine their own views or prejudices. Politicians sometimes do the same. Tony Blair, otherwise a very successful prime minister, failed to take into account facts which suggested intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq was faulty. Donald Trump, most recently, has defended his claims that a hurricane was predicted to strike Alabama. When he was corrected by climate experts he refused to “amend his case accordingly.” He persisted in something which was clearly false. And Boris Johnson has been repeatedly confronted with controversial past statements he has made and responded with his own “historical

revisionism.” He has simply denied he made certain controversial remarks when television footage clearly shows that he is not telling the truth. The past is contentious enough without those who are engaged right now in making history in the present being guilty of their own “historical negationism.” Their failure of honesty is like a virus infecting public life, right down to the woman in Conway Hall who, no doubt, genuinely believes what she was saying even if it is demonstrably false.

And of course that woman is far from alone. In Rye in Sussex at a similar public meeting a very angry man said that the EU “dictatorship” had imposed laws on Britain without our consent. I asked him which laws that had been imposed on Britain without our consent had most severely affected his life. There was a long pause. Could he name any single law imposed on Britain without our consent? He admitted that he could not. Or there was the woman who came up to me when I was campaigning in Argyle Street in Central London during the European election campaign. She was about 30 years old and hurrying home from work. “I’m voting for Nigel Farage,” she declared.

“Oh,” I said. “Do you mind me asking why?”

“Because the European Union is totally undemocratic.”

“So you are *voting* in an election for the European *Parliament* in favour of someone who has been a *member of that parliament* for 20 years. Which are the bits of that which are democratic?”

“Oh,” she said “I hadn’t thought of it quite like that.”

David Cameron joins a long line of leaders trying to justify himself to history by writing it himself. Julius Caesar did the same in his account of military campaigns against the tribes in what is now France in *De Bellis Gallicis*. Winston Churchill wittily suggested that “history will be kind to me for I intend to write it.” But even if Churchill and Caesar made some factual errors (as we all do) they at least attempted to offer the truth as they saw it. Nowadays “historical negationism” and denying the past form only part of the problem. The real issue in 2019 is those in positions of power and authority who negate the truth about what is happening right here and right now, and how a pattern of falsehoods now affects our public life from Westminster right down to the talk on the streets or at public meetings or in pubs among ordinary decent people. We are facing a virus of lies. We need to find a cure.



Gavin Esler is a journalist, television presenter and author. He was a main presenter of the BBC current affairs show *Newsnight* for 12 years until 2014. Since 2014 he has been a public speaker, a political commentator and journalist, and the Chancellor of the University of Kent. In 2019, he stood for Change UK in the European Parliament elections.

A History of Christian and Muslim Intolerance and Beyond

Selina O'Grady

Let me come clean: like millions of others in post-Christian liberal Europe, I am a believer. I believe in the great Enlightenment values of liberty, equality and fellow-feeling. Which is why I do not believe that tolerance is the great virtue it is cracked up to be.

I am a white middle-class post-Christian liberal. I pride myself on not being a bigot. Yet my hackles rise when I see a woman in a full-faced veil. My outraged feminist self says ban the burqa. But my liberal self says people should be free to believe whatever they wish and to dress accordingly.

My personal conflict, I think, reflects in microcosm the conflict Western Europe is experiencing in its response to the increasing presence of religious traditionalists, a less pejorative word than 'fundamentalists', meaning those who believe that their holy scriptures are at least in part the direct word of God, that they are subject to only one interpretation — that of the believer's own sect of course — and that true Muslims/Jews/Christians must live accordingly.)

Liberalism assumes that the flourishing of the individual is the ultimate good — that that flourishing can only occur when the individual is free to follow their own beliefs and lifestyles, as long as they do no harm to others. That of course means that the liberal state must be a pluralist one. So how can a liberal state ban the burqa? Or ban traditionalist religious (mainly Muslim) parents from protesting outside a primary school in Birmingham where their children are being taught about LGBT lifestyles? How far should a liberal society tolerate what it considers to be intolerant. Should a liberal society be illiberal in order to put a stop to illiberalism?

Those questions are what prompted me to write my book *In the Name of God* that looks at how the Christian and Muslim worlds have treated their religious minorities and how the concept of tolerance and intolerance has developed in both worlds. I want to suggest an alternative to the dilemma of either tolerating or not tolerating the intolerant, an alternative that does not resort to the incoherence of relativism.

My story starts in 320 CE when the Roman emperor Theodosius announced that henceforth all the people in his vast empire would be Christians or be smitten by both imperial and divine vengeance. I trace the different paths both religions have taken — and why they did so — through the stories of the persecutors and the persecuted. My story ends in 1945 after the Armenian genocide in the Muslim world and the Holocaust in the Western by which time all religions' capacities to unleash hatred were transferred on to nationalism.

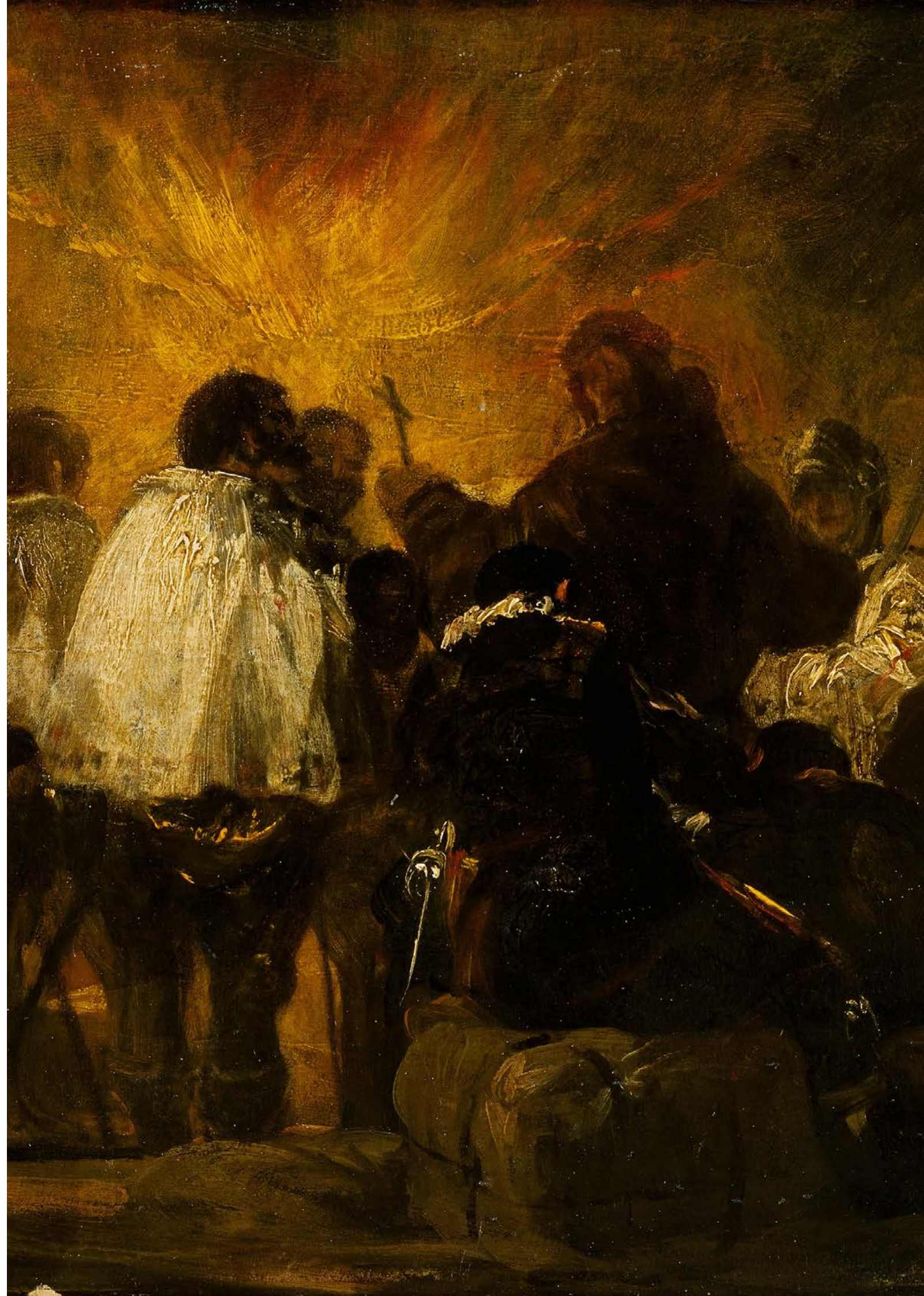
“Liberalism assumes that the flourishing of the individual is the ultimate good — that that flourishing can only occur when the individual is free to follow their own beliefs and lifestyles”

According to the Pew Research Centre, the most intolerant countries in the world today are Muslim. And yet, it is true to say that until the late 19th century Islamdom was far more tolerant than Christendom. Think of Europe's treatment of Jews — the expulsions, the ghettos, the massacres — regular events in Europe, but far less so in the Islamic world. Christianity gave hatred of the Jews a religious justification — they had crucified Christ, as medieval priests made a point of emphasising from every pulpit — and not until 1965 did the Catholic Church disavow the responsibility of all Jews for Christ's sufferings.

Not that either the Christian or Muslim world thought tolerance was a good thing. On the contrary, it was a sign of impiety. It fostered heresy. And since politics and religion were (and still are) inseparable, tolerance also fostered rebellion: both heresy and rebellion were revolts against authority.

Furthermore, intolerance could be (and still is) an extremely useful tool especially at times of insecurity — for king as well as caliph, pope as well as Muslim scholar. Less easy to wield in a multi-religious, multi-ethnic Islamic empire, of course, but used nonetheless. Caliphs enforced regulations against Jews and Christians most harshly when they felt they were losing the loyalty

Right: Detail from Francisco Goya - Night Scene from the Inquisition





of their Muslim subjects. In Christendom, where Jews were the only religious minority of any significance, they were regularly made the scapegoat for all the ills of society.

Unite your own people behind you by giving them a religious enemy; at the same time prove your own religious credentials by your harsh treatment of them.

Intolerance is the tool of the populist – think of Trump and Ayatollah Khomeini. But while no one wants to be the victim of intolerance, being tolerated isn't that much fun either.

What exactly tolerance means for the tolerated was perhaps set in the seventh century when Arab tribesmen began their conquest of the Byzantine and the Persian Empires. The conquerors – mostly illiterate men from the desert, unused to cities – needed the trade and administrative skills of the mainly Jewish and Christian inhabitants of the highly sophisticated cities they had conquered. Hence Jews and Christians were protected by the dhimma – allowed to practise their religion and guaranteed their lives and property. But in return they had to pay a tax and show due deference to Muslims, rise to their feet whenever a Muslim entered a room, never build a house higher than a Muslim's, never be employed in a position of superiority over a Muslim, or wear clothes that distinguished them from Muslims – in the 9th century for instance, Jews and Christians had to wear an identifying yellow patch on their cloaks, an idea later taken up by the Catholic Church and of course by the Nazis.

Better by far than being murdered, persecuted or having your views and practices banned. But not something to be wished for. To be tolerated is to be grudgingly put up with. As Goethe said, 'To tolerate is to insult'. Or as Samad, in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* says: who wants to stay [in England]? In a place where you are never welcomed, only tolerated. Just tolerated. Like you are an animal finally house-trained.' Or again, as Lenny Henry said recently, 'I'm growing impatient with this idea of tolerance because who wants to be tolerated?'

Tolerance is based on the tolerator's dislike of and superiority over the tolerated. It makes, therefore, a very unstable basis for a society since dislike can all too easily turn into hatred. Furthermore, tolerance is a recipe for a perpetually divided society. It says, 'I don't particularly like your beliefs or behaviour but go ahead anyway'; in effect it says to all the different minority groups in our society, 'You go your way and I'll go mine' (compare the Quran: 'you have your religion and I have mine' 109:6).

But pluralism need neither end in a distasteful tolerance nor in its equally unpalatable close sister, moral relativism – the idea that every practice and belief is as good as any other. Let me take you back to the Enlightenment.

In Western eyes, the Enlightenment marks an irrevocable split between the West and the Islamic world. For the West the Enlightenment stands for the triumph of the individual (the basis of liberalism), of rationalism over faith, the death of authority, including the death of God; it introduced the great principles of liberty, equality and fellow feeling – and the idea that these were rights to

be demanded of a ruler, not benefits which, like tolerance, could be graciously bestowed (and therefore, of course less graciously withdrawn).

In 1798 Napoleon invaded Egypt (al-Wahhab – that symbol for the West of Islamic intolerance and fundamentalism – had died only six years earlier).

Napoleon invaded with his army of soldiers – and also with an army of scholars who set up an Institute in Cairo. Its laboratories, workshops and library were intended to show off the wonders of the Western Enlightenment to Muslim visitors.

“The Enlightenment marks an irrevocable split between the West and the Islamic world. For the West the Enlightenment stands for the triumph of the individual (the basis of liberalism), of rationalism over faith, the death of authority, including the death of God”

The differing reactions of two Muslim scholars, a pupil and his teacher, to their visit are symptomatic of the divisions within the Muslim world towards the West which still exist today. The older man, al-Jabarti, admired the inventions on display but was suspicious of the ideas behind them as lacking all religious framework. His pupil al-Attar embraced whole-heartedly the ideas as well as the inventions. As an early Muslim modernist, he believed that Islam and Enlightenment values were totally compatible: indeed he thought that equality and the idea of natural rights were in fact derived from Islam. So did that major Muslim figure of the second half of the 19th century - Jamal al-Afghani. A chain smoking political activist expelled from India, Iran and Egypt, al-Afghani was perhaps the man most responsible for politicising Islam. He saw a reformed Islam as the only way to combat Western colonial dominance. In a way, so did al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928, and his contemporary the Shiite cleric Ruholla Khomeini. But for them, “reformed” meant a return to traditional doctrine. For many Muslims the advent of the ‘Enlightenment on horseback’ as Napoleon was called, has forever tarnished the image of the Western Enlightenment. It's hard to embrace the great principles of liberty, equality and fellow feeling when they come attached to political and economic conquest and humiliation. It's easy to think that those much trumpeted principles were – and still

are – actually one big exercise in hypocrisy, that they are no more than Western imperialism dressed up in virtuous clothing.

I agree that these principles have been abused in the cause of colonialism and hypocritically applied; that they often have done and still do apply only to men, and white privileged Christian or post-Christian ones at that. None the less, they are magnificent principles if they are applied, as they should be, on the basis that all humanity is indeed equal – if therefore they are applied to women as well as men, to white and non-white, rich and poor, Christian and non-Christian and someone of no religion at all, to straight, gay and everyone in between.

We liberals have been tormenting ourselves with how intolerant we are prepared to be in order to preserve our tolerance. I believe we should ignore that question. Instead we should be declaring our commitment to enlightenment values and judging each case in the light of them. How far, for instance, would banning the Birmingham parents' protest or wearing the burqa hinder or further the cause of realising our three principles. Will such a ban harm the cause of freedom of expression, or of a sense of equality between traditionalist religious and secular or religious modernists, more than it will harm the cause of achieving equality between the sexes/genders and between LGBT people and heterosexuals?

Inevitably our three principles will clash. At times equality will have to be sacrificed to liberty or fellow-feeling. Each case will have to be decided on its own merits. We are bound to disagree on whatever decision is made. But at least the arguments and decisions will be decided on an openly declared commitment to the way we want our society to progress. This is to go way beyond tolerance – which is no more than a grudging acceptance of the status quo, of irreconcilable differences in our society with all the instability that implies. This commitment is to a vision of the future which potentially could unite all of us across our religious, non-religious, sexual and colour differences. Naive perhaps but better by far than the two alternative routes that are so often proposed: either throwing up our hands and going for tolerance and multi-cultural relativism – an extraordinarily patronising form of tolerance – or simply imposing a neo-con version of ‘the enlightenment on horseback’.



Selina O'Grady is the author of *In the Name of God: A History of Christian & Muslim Intolerance*, published by Atlantic Books, August 1919, and *And Man Created God: Kings, Cults and Conquests at the Time of Jesus* (Atlantic Books, 2012). She was a producer of BBC One's *Heart of the Matter*, presented by Joan Bakewell, Channel 4's live chat show *After Dark*, and Radio 4's history series *Leviathan*. She has written for the *Guardian*, *Mail on Sunday*, *Literary Review* and *The Oldie*.

Bloomsbury Festival: Small Steps, Big Ideas

The theme of this year's Bloomsbury Festival – ‘*Small Steps and Giant Leaps*’ – took its inspiration from the 50th anniversary of the moon landing. For the fifth year running Conway Hall ran a festival hub, on Sunday 20 Oct 2019, named ‘*Small steps, big ideas...*’ A series of events running throughout the day explored today’s grand challenges including toxic politics, climate change and inequality and how to pave the way for a better future by influencing personal and global change. Talks and discussions included visioning the future by Compassion in Politics, revolutionary developments in pain relief, and questioning religious beliefs towards LGBT people. A film screening of ‘*Londoners*’ celebrated the diverse identities of a group of young Londoners, Newham Books ran a book stall, and Truth to Power Café put on a theatre performance which combined memoir, image, poetry, music and live testimony from participants speaking their truth to power.



Dr Shola Mos-Shogbamimu and AC Grayling, Compassion in Politics discussion



Jeremy Goldstein, Truth to Power Café



Truth to Power participants line-up



90 Years at Conway Hall

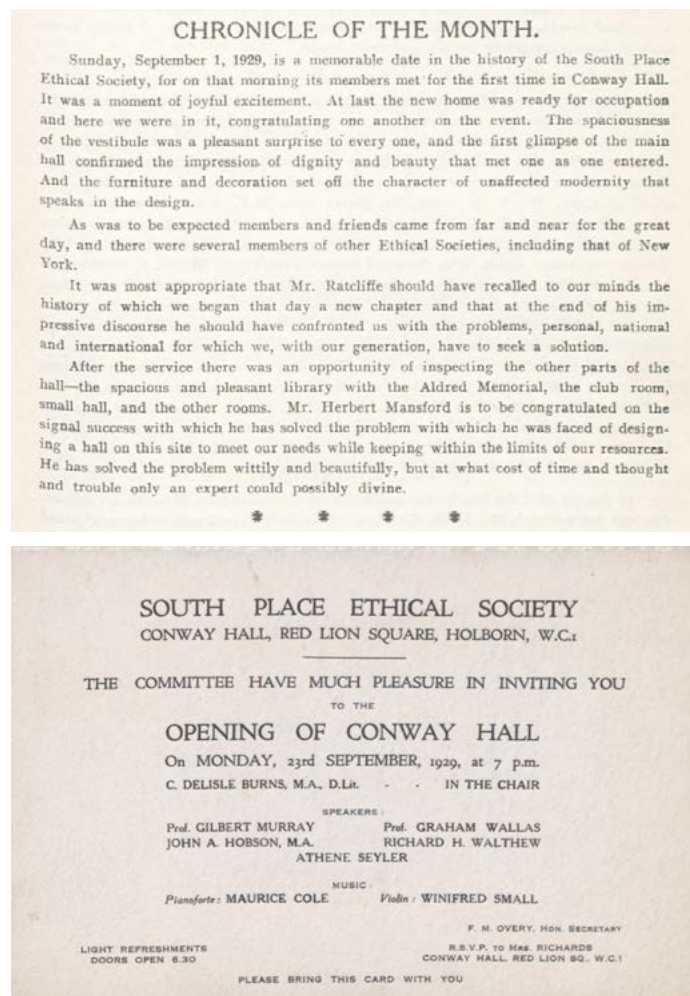
Alicia Chilcott

September 2019 marked the 90th anniversary of the opening of Conway Hall as a new home for the Ethical Society. Our building has provided a space for free thinking, open discussion, arts and activism throughout this period and has become a haven for many in the bustling heart of London.

The Ethical Society itself dates back to 1787, when it was established by Elhanan Winchester as a nonconformist congregation rebelling against the doctrine of eternal damnation. The Society has had three main homes throughout its history and the spaces we have met in have changed in line with the changing nature of the Society itself. Parliament Court Chapel in Bishopsgate was the first space inhabited by the Society, from 1793 until 1824, when it was a small congregation. In 1824, our then minister William Johnson Fox oversaw the building of the Society's first purpose-built space, South Place Chapel in Finsbury, to hold the quickly growing congregation. Fox, a popular orator and reformer, had brought with him many new members since he became minister in 1817, particularly those among progressive Unitarian circles. The Society took on the name of South Place Religious – and later Ethical – Society and remained in this space for 102 years.

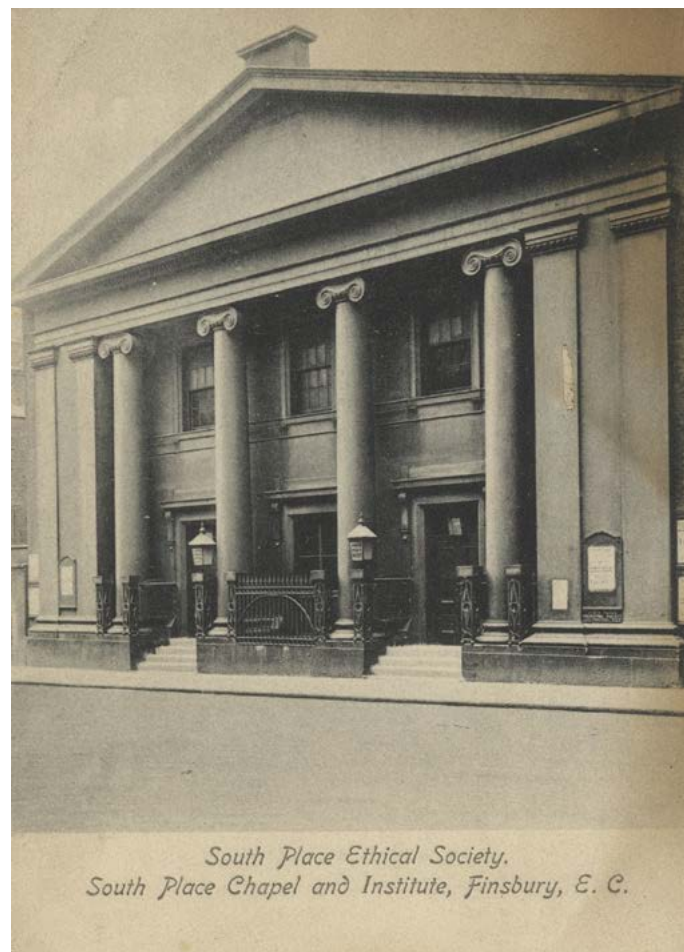
By 1900 the Society began to discuss the need for a new building to accommodate greater numbers of people and provide a greater variety of spaces, to meet the needs of the increasingly varied and active social and intellectual life of the Society. By this time, members were meeting regularly for events such as poetry and discussion circles, children's tea parties, theatrical performances and soirees, as well as larger lectures and concerts. By the close of the nineteenth century, the Society had also moved away from its religious associations, becoming a humanist Ethical Society – a chapel was no longer a fitting home.

The architect Frederick Herbert Mansford, a member of the Society, and his brother Wallis began to gather ideas for the Society's new home. They drew up an ambitious wish-list, including a 'swimming bath convertible into a gymnasium in winter months', a



lending and reference library, bookshop, labour and emigration bureau and roof garden. This early enthusiasm was halted by the outbreak of the First World War, but funds were finally gathered in 1921 through membership donations and the sale of South Place Chapel. In 1922, an L-shaped plot at the corner of Red Lion Square was purchased, with the construction of Conway Hall eventually beginning in 1928.

Plans for the new building were detailed in a 1927 Appeal Fund booklet that was circulated amongst members, calling for donations amounting to £15,000 to add to an existing £30,000 already raised, as required to



fulfil the architect Mansford's plans. The booklet states that 'it is hoped [the building] may become the Headquarters of the Ethical Movement in the British Isles, and provide an open platform for speakers from any part of the world.' It was decided that the building would be named after Moncure Conway, the Society's minister from 1864-85 and 1893-97 and the man responsible for guiding the Society towards a humanist outlook. Conway was a notable abolitionist campaigner, an advocate for gender equality and a peace campaigner, he embodied everything that the Ethical Society is about. Conway Hall features a combination of Art Deco and

Arts and Crafts features, with its distinctive geometric windows a clear nod to the fashionable Art Deco movement of the 1920s–30s and the silver-grey external brickwork and oak-shelved library taking on the Arts and Crafts style. The main hall was designed with excellent acoustics to meet the needs of a vibrant lecture and concert programme and retains its reputation today as one of the best venues for the performance of music in London. Working with a minimal budget, many of the furnishings and features of Conway Hall were 'upcycled' from the previous chapel or nearby locations. The baroque-style urns that adorn the elevations on Red Lion Square and along Lambs Conduit Passage were purchased from the nearby Union Bank and much of the seating was taken from the old chapel and is still going strong today. Another feature passed over from South Place Chapel is the quote 'to thine own self be true,' which was written above the Chapel's altar and now inspires those who visit our Main Hall.

“The members first set foot in the the newly completed Conway Hall on 1 September 1929.”

The members first set foot in the newly completed Conway Hall on 1 September 1929. A notice in the ***Ethical Record*** recounts that: 'The spaciousness of the vestibule was a pleasant surprise to everyone and the first glimpse of the main hall confirmed the impression of dignity and beauty that met one as one entered. And the furniture and decoration set off the character of unaffected modernity that speaks in the design.' The official opening took place on 23 September 1929 and saw the Ethical Society and its kindred bodies gather in the Main Hall to hear from speakers including Conway Hall's appointed lecturer Cecil Delisle Burns, economist John A. Hobson and Athene Seyler, a devoted member and actor. These speeches 'were felt to express in a most adequate way the spirit and purpose of our work and were accorded an enthusiastic reception.'

Since this first meeting 90 years ago, Conway Hall has housed a number of landmark events. The 1940 Indian Independence rally, 1943 Socialist Medical Association meetings that led to the formation of the NHS, meetings of the National Campaign for the Abolition of Capital Punishment in the 1950s and, more recently, the 2016 launch of the Women's Equality Party all took place within our walls. Speakers such as the writer H.G. Wells, philosopher and activist Bertrand Russell, politician Fenner Brockway and writer and women's suffrage campaigner Mary Stocks have graced our stage. Our impressive musical heritage spans from the longest-running chamber music programme in Europe to blues legend Muddy Waters and punk band Crass. We continue to build on this impressive heritage of progressive and diverse events, hopefully for many years to come.

Not Just A Refugee

A photographic exhibition by Adiam Yemane

A selection of the portraits and stories from the Not Just a Refugee exhibition, which was displayed at Conway Hall from 22 June to 31 August 2019, are shown here. The exhibition offers inspiring stories of newcomers who entered the UK claiming asylum or as refugees. It celebrates the lives of people who have worked hard to fulfil their potential and despite, in many cases experiencing overwhelming odds, succeed.

The realities of life in their destination can often belie expectations – having to start all over again without many of the privileges they had in their origin country. Sometimes this means working three times harder than someone who has had the privilege of being from here or sacrificing their identity to fit in with the welcoming society that's not always hospitable and accepting of other cultures.

This exhibition shares the stories of people, who after ten years or more of arriving in the UK are making a positive contribution to communities across London and in wider society as social activists, change agents and community leaders. They are role models to all who encounter them and their work.

The photographs and stories seek to interrupt our thinking about refugees and asylum seekers – to challenge our stereotypes and widely held assumptions that they are an inevitable cost or even burden to society. We know that their contributions are often overlooked, discounted or downplayed.

Adiam Yemane

“If I was still in Eritrea I'd be shooting an AK47 or probably dead.

When you reach grade 12 you are also trained as a soldier and whoever fails has to join military services and serve the war.

25/5/2005 was my first day in London, I was kept in the airport for hours which felt like the whole day waiting for social services to arrive and take me to my temporary accommodation. My first foster family was in Brixton. My first day in Brixton market was magical but also shocking. I thought I was back in Africa and at the time this was not a great feeling (although now I love going to Brixton as often as I can as it's when I feel a bit closer to home).

Three months later I moved to Orpington. Finding a school that would take me was hard but we managed to get a place at Bishop Justus Church Of England School where I completed my secondary school education. People's reactions in school were funny - they'd say “hold on to your Ethiopian you must be able to run long distance” or they would ask me “why are you not skinny?”. I am quite proud of 12-year-old me because I just thought it was funny and I could see that they didn't know any better. School was alright but I gave up after being forcefully moved from my favourite foster house without either me or my foster mum wanting me to move. Social services gave a reason that did not make sense and I'm still not clear to this day. They also forgot to take me to the Home Office for me to claim asylum, this caused so many problems and it also meant that I was in the UK illegally for a year.

The day I moved was the day I bought a pack of cigarettes for the first time and was the day I embraced my rebellious side. I was first to do anything that my friends were scared to do; 14-year-old me thought I was taking it out on the system. I even sued Hillingdon social services for my move and all I got was a letter of apology and £150, but my life was completely changed from there on. Every day was hell. I was doing anything to distract myself from what was going on, I never wanted to go home after school and because of this I was not doing



Adiam Yemane

well with anything. I was completely distracted. At the age of 16 and a half I was given the option to move out to semi-independent accommodation. At the time I was in a relationship, so I spent a lot of time with him and was also attending my first year of college, where I got a distinction in Art and Design. Fashion had a massive influence on my work that year so I soon switched my focus to studying fashion. It wasn't what I expected so I left. This was the same with business but at the time I was given £45 a week for everything I needed and we all know that is not enough, so my mind was on making more money. I worked several jobs at the time, one of them being braiding hair for friends and anyone I came across with Afro hair. I went through a lot between the ages of 18 and 20, it's probably the lowest point of my life thus far. I then had a year of really exploring my interest and that's when I discovered my special relationship with photographs. I decided to buy a camera and quickly fell in love with it. Soon I wanted to learn more specifically about photography as a medium which led me to studying photography and ultimately, my career.”

Hoda Ali

“Just hearing the news makes it hard to breathe. Like everyone else, I want to shut my ears whenever the word Syria is mentioned. Switch stations on the radio; turn off the TV and pretend it isn't happening. But unlike most people, I can't. You see, I know what war is. The words ‘bombs’ and ‘massacre’ are not something I've only ever heard in the news.

I am a refugee. I've lived in the UK for decades. I'm good-looking and I smile as if I've no cares in the world. I never look scruffy. I always smell good and dress well. But I'm still a refugee. If you were a patient in the HIV clinic where I worked, I would have given you all my attention, and done my best to help you. You would never have guessed my own battles. I'd be your fiercest advocate – a picture of strength. But I'm more than what you see. I am a refugee. I don't like to talk about it, but I feel that today I have to. I want to make you understand what it's like, beyond the words ‘massacre’ and ‘bombs’.

I was eight when the Somali war broke out in Hargeisa. It was the week after Eid and my younger sister and I were given the most beautiful dresses to wear. I still remember mine: a white dress with red flowers and a bow around the waist. I felt like a princess. My oldest sister shook me out of my sleep. ‘Get up. We have to go.’ Even though I was little I knew things weren’t right. There had been gunshots in my dreams. But no one explains war to a child. ‘Can’t we wait for mum and dad?’ ‘No, they’ll meet us later.’ ‘Can I pack my dress?’ My sister was already dragging me out the door. ‘There’s no need. We’ll come back for it. Now we have to go.’

Until that day all I had known was what every child should know; love, family, school, games, home and safety. Yet there I was, escaping war with my sisters and brothers. Planes were flying overhead, but a child can only run so fast. It took us three days to reach the mountains. I can’t explain to you the comfort of silence after the blare of gunshots and bombs. But the silence of the mountains brought with it the rumbling of stomachs. I’d never known hunger before.

We spent two weeks there before my father contacted us. We had to walk again, this time to the airport where he was waiting. We found safety for a couple more years in Mogadishu. I went to school again and made new friends. Life returned to normal – but then the war caught up with us again.

I could not follow my family when they escaped for a second time. I was bedbound in a hospital in Mogadishu, a tube attached to my privates to drain the period blood that had been accumulating in my stomach, a complication of Female Genital Mutilation carried out on me at the age of seven. My parents had thought FGM would keep me safe. Instead, it trapped me in hospital in the midst of the worst crisis. My father stayed with me, even though his old position in the Somali army made him a prized target. When the hospital itself was bombed my father managed to arrange for our escape to Djibouti. I stayed there for four more years. Then my health got progressively worse and no hospital could help me, so I was given a visa to travel to Italy.

When you think of Somalia, you think of pirates, desert and war. When I dream of Somalia, I see the Roman port of Mogadishu and the old city of Shanghai and the nightlights over the valley of Hargeisa. You see, I never wanted to leave my beautiful country. I wanted to stay. I wanted to go back for my dress. I did not want to be a refugee.

Today, I am every little girl in Syria. But unlike them, I was given the chance to escape. This time, Europe has shut its borders. Politicians pat each other on the back. Europe has stopped the ‘floodgates’. The Balkan and Mediterranean routes are closed. Theresa May trades deals on people’s lives with her EU counterparts.

Some people will call me ungrateful but they’re wrong. I’m grateful I was given the chance to survive, to rebuild



Hoda Ali

my life and to make it worthwhile. That’s why I want the same for the refugees trapped in squalid refugee camps on Greek islands and in Turkey. We claim success because we’ve paid Turkey to keep those in need of protection from finding it in Europe.

While EU Governments debate whether or not to give shelter and to how many, my hope lies in people. Everyone can help. There are things we can change in the long-term, and there are crises we can respond to immediately. Write to your MEP and ask them to reopen the routes for refugees immediately. Write to your MP and tell them the UK has a responsibility to offer sanctuary. Write to the papers and the BBC whenever you hear the word ‘migrant’ being used to describe those fleeing war. Tell them the word is ‘refugee.’ Tell them words matter when people’s lives are at stake.

Whatever you do, please don’t pretend we don’t exist. And don’t, for one second, think it couldn’t have been you.”

Rema Kahsay

“I recall feeling the excitement of getting on a plane for the first time ever to a country outside Eritrea. To step into unknown waters, an unknown language, but knowing the televised British culture.

24th of December 2007, 6am, London, I made a point to my 10 year old self to recall this day. Amazed to finally be able to see what 6am looks like and also amazed that it could be so dark in the morning.

I look up at my mamma and she looks down on me and says “This is our new home, now you say nothing”.

So many emotions ran through, confused about a culture that I didn’t know, sad because I didn’t get to say goodbye to my friends, unsafe because we did not know anyone at all. Although my family had always consisted of my mama and my brother Daniel, I felt truly alone.

It’s funny trying to recollect the memories of immigrating here to the UK as an adult — as a child you’re partly oblivious to what is shaping your environment.

What I thought was a waiting room in an airport as a 10 year old, was in fact a room where my family and many others were detained without an explanation. One TV placed ridiculously high on the wall, and massive windows disguised as mirrors as if we were under interrogation on an episode of CSI.

I remember being driven in a white van by stern looking men in uniforms from London to Liverpool, where we were housed temporarily in the most depressing motel, my brother and I the only kids there.

Our room had a single bed, somehow my mamma managed to communicate with no English the need for another bed for a single mother and two children. I cried every single night for the next three months, wishing that all this was a nightmare, a dream I could wake up from to be able to find myself home again. Home the place I knew to be familiar, not whatever this was.

After Liverpool, we were placed in Blackburn with Darwen, Lancashire. We had a house with a living room, a kitchen, separate bedrooms (of course I asserted my privileges of being the elder sister and got the bigger room) and a garden. My eyes gleamed, as we have never had a garden - it was something out of a Christmas film and was magical, we went to school nearby, we went to the library all the time and borrowed books I could not yet understand but I loved the idea that one day I’d be able to read them. I had a best friend again, she was of completely different culture, Pakistani Muslim. I learned a lot about the South Asian community in this town and of varying culture outside of my Catholic-Orthodox upbringing.

As much as my brother and I loved this town, my mamma still wasn’t satisfied, she needed a strong sense of Eritrean culture and so in the summer of 2008 we moved to London.



Rema Kahsay

That was a huge change for us, London was big and scary and so busy, I’d never been around anything like it before. The three of us had moved into a studio flat with a family friend in south London, we spent all summer signing up to secondary schools for me and primary school for Daniel. We managed to find places, considering how last minute it was and ever since we’ve lived here, for the past 11 years. Moved from the studio flat to a one bedroom apartment, my mamma brought two other beautiful brothers into this world, then finally after many years the council had given us a house that would actually accommodate us (in size).

London has had a fundamental place in how I see myself, I feel very privileged to have had my primitive years spent in the most culturally diverse place I know. There’s a lot you can learn here as well as access which may have been more difficult to do in other parts of the UK. So shout to my mamma for making this executive decision, brap brap.

I’ve discovered that I’m a very creative person — I always was. As a child I used to attend dance schools and perform for big audiences back home.

Currently I find myself to be very interested in Film and Documentary making, I am trying to learn as much as I can behind the scenes as well as being in front of the camera. As you can see I enjoy talking – a lot! My mamma always said I’d be a journalist or a presenter. Last year at the end of 2018, I began a podcast, named Now & Gone, speaking on my polyamorous experiences as a Black Queer Woman. I am also currently in the process of making a documentary on the Black Queer experience/identity in London, with a production team I joined early this year.

London is definitely home, so I identify myself as a Londoner, not British (although I did just gain my long awaited citizenship) but I never forget my roots, I am Eritrean. I am so many things, and I revel in being able to identify with so many communities. It’s great to know that I have families outside of my blood line. We are three dimensional beings, it only hurts you to box yourself up in one identity.”

Fun Palaces — Community, Creativity and Adventures

Hazel East

If you asked most people what a Fun Palace was in 2012 you'd have most probably gotten a blank look, or maybe a guess at something to do with a fairground. Prior to 2013, the words 'Fun Palace' were only really heard together amongst two groups, theatre makers and architects.

Conceived in the 1960s by pioneering theatre director Joan Littlewood, and architect Cedric Price, a Fun Palace was to be a 'university of the streets', a place where anyone and everyone could come to learn a new skill, share something with others and be free to experiment. Joan Littlewood described the Fun Palace in its original blueprints as a place to 'Choose what you want to do – or watch someone else doing it. Learn how to handle tools, paint, babies, machinery, or just listen to your favourite tune. Dance, talk or be lifted up to where you can see how other people make things work. Sit out over space with a drink and tune in to what's happening elsewhere in the city. Try starting a riot or beginning a painting – or just lie back and stare at the sky.'

Joan and Cedric's vision for this creative, political, exploratory space never came to fruition, but thanks to an intrepid group of creatives it's been given a new lease of life in the 21st Century.

In 2013, writer Stella Duffy led a discussion at Improbable's annual Devoted and Disgruntled Open Space event entitled "Who wants to do something for Joan Littlewood's centenary in October 2014, that isn't another revival?" After a fruitful discussion the idea to create a Fun Palace came about. Stella was joined by Sarah-Jane Rawlings and a host of others, who came together to encourage and inspire people across the UK to celebrate Joan's centenary by holding their very own Fun Palace. The first Fun Palace weekend was held the following year, on 4th and 5th October 2014, and to their surprise (and delight) 138 Fun Palaces appeared across the country, and the annual event was born.

Conway Hall Welcomes the Community

Fast forward to 2018, and Fun Palaces were very much in full swing across both the UK, and for the first time,

the wider world. The arts team at Holborn Community Association (HCA) had realised that their aims of bringing arts and culture to the local community fitted well with the by now rapidly expanding 'movement' of Fun Palaces, and set out to join in and bring Holborn its first Fun Palace. HCA approached Conway Hall to see if they would be interested in hosting a Fun Palace, with a view to bringing the local community into an exciting space that they might not have visited before.

In 2018 planning started by talking to as many people as possible, to find people with the skills to run workshops or activities but also to find those who might like to come along as participants. The number of responses was overwhelming, and allowed for a varied and eclectic programme from drama games to giant flu virus making, art to gardening, joined by a wide range of local community members and organisations. This diverse mix was replicated in 2019, when lots of people, including some new additions, came along to share their skills. Yoga in the library, storytelling, digital orchestras and lots of slime making sent everyone away with smiles on their faces.

What Makes Fun Palaces Special?

HCA works with a wide range of local organisations to create a vibrant and diverse offer of support and activities for local people. The partnership with Conway Hall on Fun Palace is especially important for a number of reasons. Instead of just being a space where professionals deliver activities, Fun Palace encourages people to share their skills and passions with others. This positivity is demonstrated by representatives from Carpmaels and Ransfords LLP, a local law firm, who this year swapped law for slime making and said their highlight was "Interacting with the kids, they loved it and it was great to see them so engaged and having fun!".

Fun Palace is curated to be as open and inclusive as possible, and 2018's event included a musical performance by a group of local learning-disabled adults, led by Sarah Johns from supported housing provider CAT. After the workshop Sarah said "I am still feeling so happy from yesterday. Thank you for the





opportunity. Was so good to have the platform and space to perform. I'm feeling very inspired and I know the rest of the group are too. It was a real confidence boost."

This positivity is echoed by feedback from the community attending as participants, one of whom said "Thank you so much for such an amazing day. All the activities were great. An incredible way to bring the community together!"

The Need for Fun Palaces — the Importance of Accessible Community Spaces

The diverse and vibrant community in Holborn is a big part of what makes our area so unique, but having so many different micro communities living, working and studying alongside each other can also bring challenges. Holborn is fairly unique for a central London location, as it has a high level of residential accommodation (with 70% being social housing) in an area that is also densely populated with office and commercial working spaces alongside large universities and educational institutions. Of those living in our neighbourhood, 90.7% of families receive tax credits and 42.1% of children are living in poverty. Holborn's residents are 59% non-White-British and the large British-Bangladeshi community in Holborn (12%) faces multiple deprivation (Camden Neighbourhood Mapping, 2016).

This creation of distinct communities, comprised of those that live in the area and those that work or study in the area, can lead to a mismatch of needs between the different groups. Practically, those living in the area often feel like local shops and amenities cater more for the working communities' transient needs, rather than their day to day needs. This is also reflected in engagement with arts, as although we are surrounded by cultural institutions there has historically been a lack of participatory, community focused art provision locally. There is a clear disconnect between these 'mainstream' organisations and the local people living on the next street. There is also a feeling from those who work or come into the area to study that they do not 'belong' to the community, despite spending a large amount of their time in Holborn.

In March 2018, The Mayor of London Sadiq Khan reflected these observations through his comments in his Strategy for Social Integration. He stated "Our approach needs to go much further than simply integration between different nationalities, ethnic

groups or faiths. It must also take account of other important aspects such as age, social class, employment status, sexuality, gender and disability. It is about social integration in a wider context - our bonds as citizens, and how we interact with one another." (Sadiq Khan, 2018, p.4)

He went on to outline three overarching aims in the strategy: supporting Londoners to be active citizens, promoting shared experiences and tackling barriers and inequalities, all three of which resonate with the reasons and aims behind Fun Palace, and the original vision set out by Joan Littlewood and Cedric Price back in the 1960s.

The programme and ethos of the event is complemented hugely by the unique and interesting setting of Conway Hall. For HCA, Fun Palace breaks down the 'threshold anxiety' of entering a new space through providing an event at which members of the community are not only welcomed as participants, but encouraged to attend as leaders and experts in their own right. Linking the community with the spaces around them helps to strengthen people's pride in their area, as well as giving them confidence to come back to Conway Hall for other events in future. Once people feel that they have ownership over local spaces they begin to feel 'part of' creativity, providing a platform for a wider conversation around access to more mainstream cultural organisations, traditional art galleries and educational institutions.

If We Don't Lost, We'll Never Find a New Route — Joan Littlewood

Thanks to Conway Hall being willing to open their doors and try something new back in 2018, two brilliant Fun Palace events have provided important, thought provoking and fun spaces for the community to come together, share their skills and experiences and positively challenge the perceptions of others who live alongside them.

If you're interested in Fun Palaces and would like to find out more the Fun Palaces website <http://funpalaces.co.uk/> is a wealth of information. If you can wait another 11 months then head down to Conway Hall for the next Fun Palace on 4th October 2020, all you need is an open mind and a sense of adventure!

Citations

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Hazel East studied drama at The University of Hull with a focus on theatre for social change. She specialises in participatory arts and drama facilitation with an interest in special educational needs and disability. She is currently Community Arts Manager at Holborn Community Association alongside being co-founder and director of Knots Arts CIC.

Donald Rooum 20 April 1928–31 August 2019

Donald was one of the Society’s longest-standing members. Even when I joined, in the mid-1980s, he already had a lengthy membership behind him. But longevity itself was far from being the main thing to recommend him.

Above consistency of attendance stood consistency of conduct and demeanour: he was always self-contained, quietly but clearly spoken in a bass voice, and economical in his words. Though a man of strong talents and interests – an innovative commercial artist and an espouser of intelligent anarchism – he was never either attention-seeking or monolithic in what he said: his contributions to the Q & A sessions of the Sunday lectures were, whatever the subject of the talk, always concise, relevant and objective, and never intended to highlight himself. I have an idea that this plainness of behaviour owed more than a little to his traditional North Country kind of upbringing, which eschewed all frills and fancies.

That lack of ostentation was also evident in his dress, which was invariably a well-worn tweed jacket, equally well-worn jeans, and sandals rather than shoes. In fact, he dressed in a way rather more befitting a younger man, and looked quite a lot younger than he was, with a slim and spry physique. My impression was that his carrying his age so well was at least partly the result of a sober and sensible life-style.

Donald’s interest in anarchism was, I think, very much bound up with his opposition to what he saw as a regimentation of the individual in modern society – a regimentation which he seemed to regard as something often disguised as something else. This is of course a familiar position among not only anarchists but all people of a generally liberal-individualistic cast of mind. Clearly, there is here food for thought for all of us, as part of our reflections on the passing of one of the Society’s most significant participants of the last 50 years or more.

Tom Rubens

Humanist library & archives

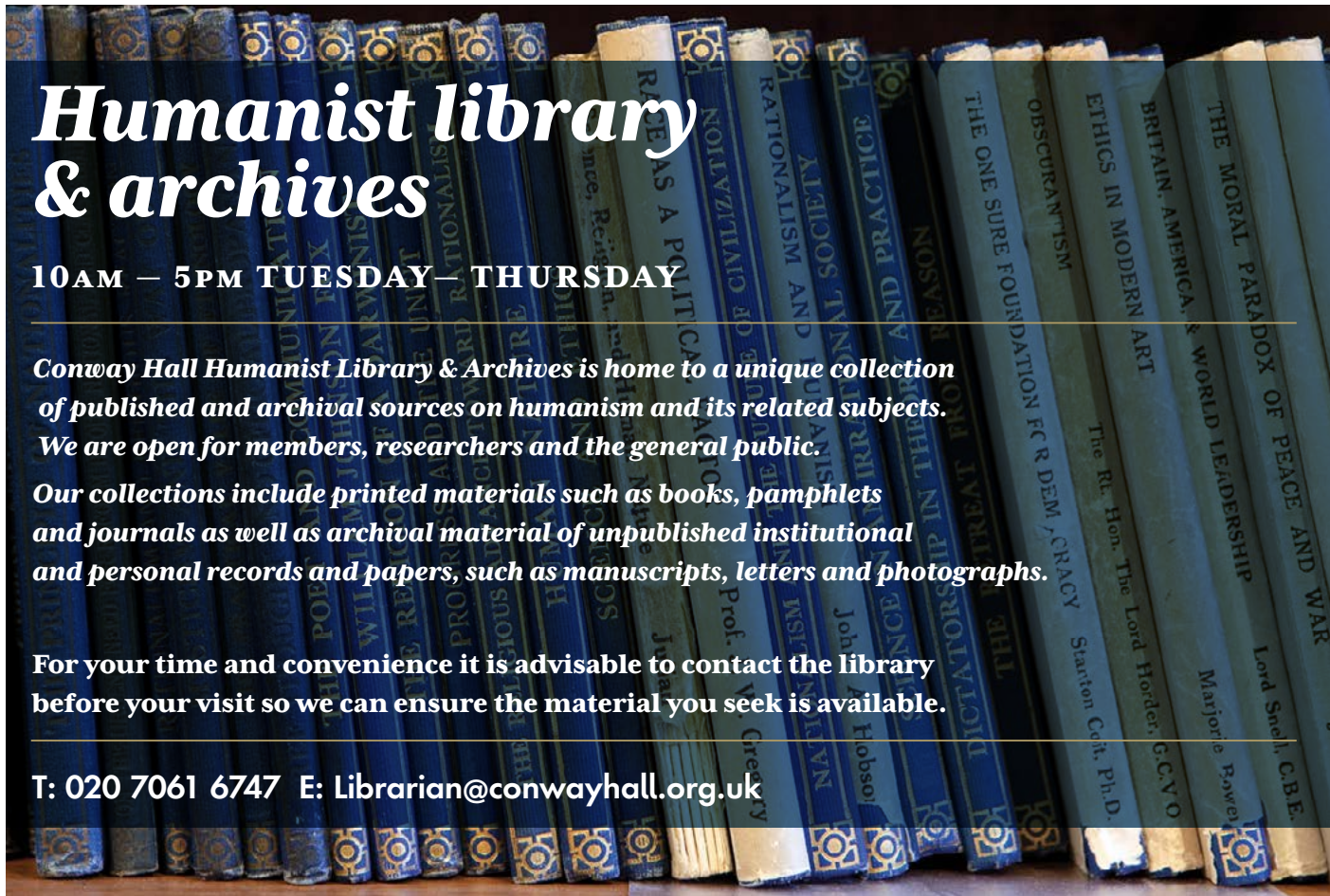
10AM – 5PM TUESDAY – THURSDAY

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS AT CONWAY HALL

EXHIBITIONS

–31 January Victorian Blogging: The Pamphleteers Who Dared To Dream Of A Better World

THINKING ON SUNDAY

12 January	15.00–16.30	Britain by Numbers: A Visual Exploration of People and Place • Stuart Newman
26 January	15.00–16.30	What We Need To Do Now: Towards Net Zero Carbon Emissions • Christopher Goodall
9 February	15.00–16.30	Witch Hunts Today • Kirsty Brimelow QC & Syd Moore
23 February	15.00–16.30	Among the Women of Isis • Azadeh Moaveni
8 March	15.00–16.30	Rankings that Rankle • Paul Goodwin
22 March	15.00–16.30	Unspeakable: The Things We Cannot Say • Harriet Shawcross

PARTNERSHIPS

8 February The Third Stuart Hall Foundation Public Conversation

COURSES

15 January–19 February 18.30–20.00 Thinking and Language • Adam Ramejkis

TALKS

13 January	19:30–21:30	Ethical Matters: Solving the Plastic Problem • Professor Chris Rhodes
22 January	19:30–21:30	Reweirding: Car Park Life • Gareth E Rees
13 February	19:30–21:00	Origins: How the Earth Made Us • Professor Lewis Dartnell
17 February	19:30–21:30	Ethical Matters: People Like Us – Social Mobility, Inequality and Making It in Modern Britain • Hashi Mohamed
10 March	19:30–21:30	Reweirding: The World of AI-Powered Creativity • Arthur I Miller

Events subject to alteration • For current information and tickets see conwayhall.org.uk

January

- 12th 6.30PM **Highgate Festival Musicians** HAYDN • SIBELIUS • BEETHOVEN
BRAHMS • SCHUMANN
- 19th 5.30PM **Robert Hugill** • **FREE PRE-CONCERT TALK**
6.30PM **Maria Canyigüeral & Lana Trotořšek** BEETHOVEN
- 26th 6.30PM **The Oriole Ensemble** MESSIAEN • HINDEMITH

February

- 2nd 5.30PM **Paolo Rinaldi** • **FREE PRE-CONCERT RECITAL**
6.30PM **Noûs Quartet** WEBERN / BEETHOVEN
- 9th 6.30PM **Simon & Raphael Wallfisch, Edward Rushton** BRAHMS • SCHUMANN
- 16th 6.30PM **Gould Piano Trio** MOZART • KORNGOLD • BRAHMS
- 23rd 5.30PM **Robert Hugill** • **FREE PRE-CONCERT TALK**
6.30PM **Lydia Shelly & Nicolas Stavy** BEETHOVEN • BRAHMS • SHOSTAKOVICH

March

- 1st 6.30PM **Tippett Quartet & Héloïse Werner** RAVEL • WALEY-COHEN
POULENC • DEBUSSY
- 8th 5.30PM **Royal College of Music Musicians** • **FREE PRE-CONCERT RECITAL**
6.30PM **Simon Callaghan & Friends** BEETHOVEN
- 15th 6.30PM **Solem Quartet** BRAHMS • REEVES • BEETHOVEN
- 22nd 6.30PM **Phacelia Ensemble** STRAVINSKY • MOZART • BRAHMS
- 29th 6.30PM **Ruisi Quartet** BRITTEN • MENDELSSOHN • WEBERN • BEETHOVEN

April

- 5th 5.30PM **Robert Hugill** • **FREE PRE-CONCERT TALK**
6.30PM **Trio Khnopff** SCHUMANN • BRAHMS • SHOSTAKOVICH • WEINBERG
- 19th 6.30PM **Galliard Ensemble & Simon Callaghan** STRAUSS • THUILLE
BEETHOVEN • POULENC
- 26th 6.30PM **Piatti Quartet** BEETHOVEN

May

- 3rd 5.30PM **Royal College of Music Musicians** • **FREE PRE-CONCERT RECITAL**
6.30PM **Simon Callaghan & Friends** BEETHOVEN
- 10th 5.30PM **Robert Hugill** • **FREE PRE-CONCERT TALK**
6.30PM **Robert Max** BACH
- 17th 5.30PM **Royal College of Music Musicians** • **FREE PRE-CONCERT RECITAL**
6.30PM **Zoffany Ensemble** SCHUBERT • BEETHOVEN
- 24th 6.30PM **United Strings of Europe & Simon Callaghan** BEETHOVEN • RODGMAN
- 31st 6.30PM **Trio Sōra** HAYDN • RAVEL • MENDELSSOHN

June

- 7th 6.30PM **Oculi Ensemble** MOZART • WEBERN • BRAHMS

