



NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2019

THE 'ASTONISHING SECRET' OF GOD'S INCARNATION

Fr. Daniel O'Leary died on 21st January. He will be especially remembered by the parish communities he served. He was also an academic- working for 20 years at St.Mary's University London, someone who regularly gave retreats and the author of some 20 books. He was diagnosed with terminal cancer during last year. However, he continued working and his final book is being prepared for publication and will be available soon.



Shortly before he died a new book by him called '**An Astonishing Secret**' was published. Two themes are interwoven throughout the book – the mystery of Creation and the mystery of Incarnation. Fr Daniel himself commented about this book: "A deeper understanding of this central heart of Christianity will transform our self-understanding and our understanding of our Planet Earth. This is the revolutionary change in Catholic consciousness that is beginning to transform Christianity from within. This is the 'magnanimous' horizon painted by Pope Francis – the re-framing of the story of Christ within our daily experiences, and within the wondrous story of our evolving universe."

Last Summer Fr.Daniel recorded a series of ten videos to complement the book. These are now available via a website. For more detail see <https://astonishingsecret.org/>

DAY OF REFLECTION: CARING FOR THE EARTH – OUR COMMON HOME

This theme of creation and our place in it is the subject of our next Day of Reflection. More and urgent action is needed about Climate Change – and we need to root this in our understanding of God's creation and the meaning of Incarnation.



Saturday 30 March 2019

SS John Fisher & Thomas More

Bradford Road, Burley in Wharfedale LS29 7PX

10:00am – 4:00pm

There will be prayer, some short inputs, discussion and time for personal reflection about our place in God's creation and our responsibilities towards looking after our common home. The day will start with the normal community mass at 10:00 and finish by 4pm at the latest. Please email jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk to book a place. Attendance is free (there will be a collection to defray expenses). EVERYONE is welcome – but please book a place.

ARE WE DISCIPLES 'OF' OR BELIEVERS 'IN' JESUS?

By Geoff Driver, Chair of Project Bonhoeffer
Project Bonhoeffer is a small Leeds-based charity and this article is written by the Chair of the trustees, Geoff Driver.

Since 2013, *Project Bonhoeffer* has held a series of day events bringing together its friends and supporters from right across the country. These DB Days, held in Coventry, Birmingham, London and Leeds, have been valued opportunities to think about Dietrich Bonhoeffer's contribution to our understanding of discipleship today. They have also enabled participants to learn about the work done through the Student Christian Movement's *Faith in Action* programme, which PB supports financially along with funding a full-time post for a member of staff whose tasks include making students more aware of Bonhoeffer's life and thought.

The 2018 *DB Day* held in October in Leeds had as its title '*Faith in political action today*' when our keynote speaker was Dr Jennifer McBride [Chicago], current president of the International Bonhoeffer Society. It attracted our largest *DB Day* gathering so far, made up of people of different ethnicities, age-groups and backgrounds – academic and otherwise – including present and past members of SCM and sister organisations and networks such as the *Iona Community*, *Justice and Peace* and the *Progressive Christian Network*.

The highlight of the day was Jennifer McBride's speech. She began it by focusing on what Bonhoeffer had said in his *Cost of Discipleship* [1937] about what it means to follow Jesus. She summed it up simply: *Christians must become disciples of, not simply believers in, Jesus*. Christians, Bonhoeffer had insisted, cannot claim faith in



Dr Jenny McBride addresses the Conference

Christ while failing to respond to Jesus's calls for hands-on, here-and-now action from those who would truly follow him. His calls are consistent, clear, practical and unambivalent: *to feed the hungry, care for the sick, welcome and give hospitality to strangers, visit those in prison, love one's enemies, forgive others, renounce wealth, practice nonviolence, refuse to resist evil with evil, not to judge others, loving mercy and doing restorative justice*.

In Bonhoeffer's view, Jesus did not call his followers to subscribe to an abstract set of religious ideas or moral principles. Nor did he see Jesus as setting up any kind of human institutional system, social, political or religious. Who then is Jesus? Bonhoeffer asks us.

His own answer is that Jesus is a person who cannot be ignored since he is the one who brings new hope to the world, transcending our human systems, disrupting our previous political, social and religious ideas and calling his followers to carry out his commands amid all the messiness and uncertainty of lived reality – the world of society and politics. That will make new demands for those who would be his disciples, for those who seek to live as active disciples



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ready and willing to give up all and to suffer and die for others.

To follow Jesus, they must start by asking: *Who are the strangers in our midst who we have overlooked, ignored or made unwelcome?*



Who are the people whom we as a society, as a community-group or congregation – have neglected, even rejected and deemed enemies?

How do we, those of us who, belonging together in a church or community-group, obey Jesus's commands to welcome strangers and enemies, be they real or perceived?

One kind of response that Dr McBride described, was that of some American city churches where new ways of serving others and of being church to the people around them were being pioneered, embodying Bonhoeffer's ideas and initiatives at the time of the Confessing Church in the 1930s. She was describing the development in the U.S. of *houses of hospitality* through which congregations have become *discipleship communities*, with 'open doors' ready and fit to engage in works of mercy through which they can reach out to those around who society despises and victimises. By sharing and supporting them in their struggle for justice, such communities have brought a new hope to those around them whose lives were broken. Their ministry, following in Jesus's footsteps as discipleship communities is to combat social evil with mercy and love for those who are the victims of an unjust society.

Plans are already on hand for the 2019 DB Day in Leeds on Saturday 26 October
Keep an eye on their website for further details www.projectbonhoeffer.org.uk/

If you missed it last November then there is a second chance to see this film – it's good!

Tue 19 March 2019 @ 6pm
– Emmanuel Centre, University of Leeds

CLAIM

ARCHBISHOP ROMERO, HIS PEOPLE AND POPE FRANCIS

A Television Suisse documentary



A rare opportunity to see this film (75mins) about the life of Saint Oscar
ALL WELCOME.

Just turn up on the night. **ALL WELCOME**



GOOD NEWS FOR THE POOR?

This is the main text for a sermon given by Fr Pat Smythe, Parish Priest of Our Lady of Kirkstall parish, for the 4th Sunday of Year C where Jesus enrages people in the synagogue with His teaching.

Today's Gospel carries on from last week the story of Jesus' announcement of his Mission. It continues that tale to describe the sequence of reactions to his preaching as the challenge of his message became more apparent. That outcome still happens today.

In 2016 when I last related the Gospel narrative to the situation in our country there were an estimated 15 million people living below the poverty line in Britain. Out of a population of some 65 million that was a significant percentage. Since then the situation has worsened. Rough sleepers are more evident on our city streets - they are not there by choice, or inexcusably. Food banks have become an established social provision in this country - set up and run by volunteers.

Far from easing the situation, several policies adopted by our national Government in recent years have actually worsened it. A number of benefit changes in the last two years impact on families, not just on individuals. For example: an overall benefit cap has impacted over 40,000 single parent households. There are also a number of concerns connected with the roll out of Universal Credit (UC). For example, council workers in one large city noted a surge in referrals to food banks: in June last year, before UC, 5% of people on an estate were referred to food banks - that has now risen to 29%. In the same city 41% of children are in poverty.

The dominant narrative in mainstream media seems to be about so-called 'benefit cheats' but the reality is that most families in poverty have at least one person in the household who is working.

It should be noted that the bureaucratic struggle simply to claim benefits is a big problem. 65% of the most vulnerable people who come to the cited city's Council for help don't have access to a computer, smart phone, or an email address. Besides possessing such an item there is also the computer literacy that is required to use them. There still many people who do not have such skills.



Last autumn the UN's Rapporteur on Poverty, Philip Alston, undertook a tour of our country. His eventual report was damning: he wrote that 'the Government had inflicted 'great misery' on its people with 'punitive, mean-spirited, and often callous' austerity policies. These assertions were rejected by Government spokespersons - but that they have been made is surely challenging to a nation with the seventh strongest economy in the world.

In the Gospel Jesus announces: *I have come to bring Good News to the poor; to proclaim liberty to captives; to the blind new sight; to set the downtrodden free.*

At one time that familiar text would have been applied by a homilist in an entirely individual, personal way with the focus on spiritual matters. So, the 'Good News' would be that God loves us, sinners though we are. By co-operating with God's grace each of us can be set free from



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the chains of sin. Jesus comes to us so that our lives will become upright and virtuous and so that we will enjoy inner peace, and eternal life in heaven.

That interpretation is still valid, of course. But we have become more aware in recent years that sin is not only private and personal. We are social creatures and there can be sinful structures in our society that can prevent us from realising our potential as human beings. Things can be so set up that they militate against our welfare both as individuals and as groups.

So, as well as striving for our personal good we should give attention also to the '**Common Good**' - the welfare of all. We must do all we can to ensure that every person and all peoples of the world enjoy their due measure of independence, equality of opportunity, and a fair share in the goods of the earth. The Kingdom of God – a Kingdom of Justice, Love and Peace - is to be built up in human society now – and well as experienced to the full in the 'hereafter'.

These sentiments, these principles, are rooted in the Gospel. They have been expressed in various practical ways in the life of the church over the centuries and they are at the heart of what is now called **Catholic Social Doctrine**. These teachings call us to action for the sake of the poor, the chained, and the downtrodden - wherever they may be and whatever is the cause of their distress.

At our Baptism we are each called to share in the mission of Christ *to bring good news to the poor*. In our country today that means we have several practical responsibilities. Here are a few examples:

1. We should urge the widespread adoption of a **Living Wage** - that is, a rate

of remuneration for work that is not an arbitrary sum, or one derived simply by extrapolating from national averages of any kind. A **Living Wage** is the payment of an amount which is adequate to provide the recipient with food, shelter, health care, and other necessities of life.

2. We should engage in the national effort to establish **food banks** in every area, and to support them where they have been set up.

3. We should denounce any assertions that lay the **blame** for personal poverty on the sufferers rather than on those whose greed is probably the underlying cause of it.

4. We should challenge **economic policies** which sustain - or risk increasing - impoverishment among our people.

It was the experience of Jesus that when the full import of his teaching was realised, that is, his pointing to the injustices being perpetrated and perpetuated in the social order of his day, his admirers began to be replaced by his critics, his teaching opposed, and efforts to prevent his activity gathered momentum. Today's Gospel summarises that sorry development which led, inexorably, to his arrest and death on the Cross: a fate suffered by all the Prophets of God, from ancient times to the present day.

Parishioners in our three churches are to be commended for their engagement and their generosity towards the local food banks - and to the SVP Society which provides for many in need in our own locality, and also more widely through the SVP Support Centre on York Road. There are many other church communities in our Diocese



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which are undertaking poverty relief work of one sort or another, which is splendid.

But there is not so much evidence of discussion or action about the **underlying causes** of family poverty, of the policy decisions that give rise to it, and of how best to respond effectively to today's unjust situations.

Jesus says: *If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear* (Matt 11:15).

The Parish Council has already approved in principle that the parish should undertake the set of 5 workshops that the Commission has developed with Church Action on Poverty – workshops designed to help everyone to get underneath the surface of the issues that we see on our streets every day.

Fr Pat finished up his sermon by encouraging parishioners to come sign up for these workshops when dates have been agreed.

J&P PARISH WORKSHOPS: FAMILY POVERTY A DIOCESE ACTS



Local stories of poverty

How poverty is changing: Lessons from eight years in a Harehills soup kitchen

There are people and projects across the UK doing remarkable work to ease hunger in their communities. Neraka White has run a soup kitchen in Harehills, Leeds, for eight years. In this interview for Church Action on Poverty's 'Voices from the Margins' project (www.voicesfromthemargins.org.uk), she talks about the changes she has seen in her neighbourhood, and what needs to change at national level.

We offer a free meal every Wednesday, and a food parcel. We also do mini workshops where we give advice and have discussions about money management and jobs and housing problems, and stuff like that, and we help people get other people involved.

We started eight years ago. It was just an idea I had, to use the church hall. I have been coming to church here for some years and noticed the poverty in the area. A lot of families are struggling and some people seem isolated and there were a lot of asylum seekers and refugees struggling, so it was just laid on my heart to get something started. The hall used to operate as an elderly day centre many years ago and that had stopped because the ladies who ran it had got too old. In the early 2000s, there was an after-school club but that had stopped as well, and I thought this was the next vision.

We usually get over 20 people in, and my family and volunteers helping out. We need to stop the poverty before it gets there. We need to help prepare people to be able to look after themselves. A great deal of people in this generation are expecting to be taken care of, then when that care is taken away we are not prepared. Or they are told to go to work but they are not trained or educated or ready for that work.

But also, there are a lot of zero-hour jobs going around. My son is very qualified and registered with agencies but has not been offered work in over two months, so he had to give up his flat and come back to live with us, after living on his own for 11 years.

I think the Government need to make sure there is enough money and resources available to take care especially of the children. Since we are in this situation, they have to take responsibility for what they have caused and make sure the next generation do not continue in the level of poverty there is now. Children need to be protected and cared for.

A great deal of people here are from Chapeltown, many who come are homeless, we get lots of people from Harehills and we also get people from further away, in LS11, LS12, LS16 and LS17.

When my children were growing up, I did experience a lot of difficult times because I had four children and there were years when we went through hard times, and my husband was working in those times. That was before we moved to the UK from Jamaica, but it was also hard here.

Children need to know that they can rely on adults to take care of them and to prepare them so that when they grow up they can be responsible to look after

Family Poverty
Session 2: extra resources



Neraka White has run a soup kitchen in Harehills, Leeds, for eight years

It's very distressing. I think MPs should come down my street sometimes.

As well as Our Lady of Kirkstall, Newman Parish Council, in East Leeds have also agreed to do these workshops and we are in discussion with a number of other parishes about the programme.

The Commission will provide a facilitator for the workshops – but it is up to the parish to promote the workshops to their community.

Could you host a set of these workshops in your parish or Churches Together group?

The materials are equally suitable for use in parish groups such as SVP groups, UCM groups or Catenians as well as with older students in High Schools.

Simply email the office if you would like more information.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY HUDDERSFIELD - Walking with the weeping sisters



We meet in the cold dark outside the Jug & Bottle, people shuffling round, nodding to old friends, nobody anxious to be seen to be too happy, because we are walking through town to mark Holocaust Memorial Day, following the sisters, five puppets towering over us, faces twisted in fixed expressions of grief and outrage, each one attended by careful guardians, who operate the huge hands on long poles, and give encouragement and instructions to the hidden puppeteers who bear the weight on their shoulders. Before we start, a group of women drums, two young women lament in song.

*the beautiful voices
refusing comfort:
everyone stands, blinking.*

We follow the drums, Stan asks me to help carry the Burundi drum, a heavy awkward instrument. We stop at the Market Cross, more singing, two fiddlers, a man with an instrument like a bodhran, grey and shivery, an insistent sound, like hailstones. The man from Burundi beats his drum with heavy sticks.

*we pass between café drinkers
and a sleeping bag*



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huddled in a shop doorway

In the warmth of the University, the Kindertransport woman, gracious and witty, shows pictures of her family laughing, before she was barred from school, her brother deleted from the University, the eternal farewell to her parents.

*a rebuke to the arrogant –
after eighty years
she is making us laugh*

After her, other testimonies: the Roma boy in his England sweatshirt, the Syrian woman, the man from Burundi, the Kurdish woman, the Serbian woman. Scrolls are unrolled for each one, the schoolchildren give their messages of tolerance and hope.

*Don't make war!
the boy says,
Make chocolate!*

The frail delicate Rabbi, in his beautiful strong voice sings Kaddish for all the dead, but first, in German, in a voice that hushes the hall, Brahms' *Lullaby*. When he has finished he has created a silence with a magnetic force we can feel. It lasts for minutes.



*There may not be six million
buttons: but every one counts.
River: treasure: ordinary things.*

John Duffy, Huddersfield

'HANDS ON' – CAFOD'S PROGRAMME TO SUPPORT ONE PARTICULAR COMMUNITY



CAFOD's 'Hands On' programme provides a way for parishes to raise money to support projects helping particular communities.

The projects last for between two to three years. The previous programme that had some similarities with this, 'Connect2', has now closed. With the Hands On programme money raised supports a particular set of projects and when that project completes parish community can then go on to support a new project. CAFOD have already completed projects in Kenya and Bolivia as part of the 'Hands On' programme.

The current 'Hands On' project is with communities in the Magdalena Medio region of Colombia. Colombia is still emerging from a protracted civil war which claimed the lives of many innocent people. The aim of Hands On Magdalena Medio is to transform lives in this region by promoting a culture of peace and reconciliation, with a focus on young people. Take a look at the CAFOD website to find out more: <https://cafod.org.uk/Fundraise/Hands-On>

CLIMATE CHANGE MASS LOBBY OF PARLIAMENT 2019 – SAVE THE DATE!

Whilst the political establishment and media are fixated on Brexit, action on Climate Change is taking a back seat.



Photo courtesy of CAFOD

It needs to be brought to the fore again and it is refreshing to see so many young people actively expressing their concern. It is an issue that needs to engage us all.

The Climate Coalition, which includes CAFOD as a prominent member, are organising another mass lobby of Parliament this year.

It will take place on **Wednesday 26th June 2019.**



The Leeds CAFOD Volunteer Centre will be organising a coach to go down to London. If you are interested in travelling on this coach then please get in touch with CAFOD using this link:

<https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Climate/Climate-lobby>

Here you can book a coach place or just say that you are going & will organise transport yourself.

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'LOOKING BACK' LENT LUNCH



Both the Justice & Peace office and the CAFOD Volunteer Centre (both housed in St Monica's to the right of the main Hinsley Hall building) have been doing some major clearing out, reorganising and tidying up. A lot of stuff has been thrown out (not a lot of call these days for actual photo slides! – and much of the material was very out of date).

However, we haven't thrown all of it out – There were many photos going back to campaigns and events from the 80's, for instance, and examples of J&P publications from that time that we still have as part of our archive of activities.

Everyone is invited to come along to a Lent Lunch on **FRIDAY 05 April** between 11:30 and 2pm and take a look at both the re-vamped Volunteer centre and the photographic and campaign displays that we will be putting up as part of this event. *Come along for as short or long a time as you are able.* Perhaps you have your own special memories of CAFOD or J&P events that you could share? –from the visit of Dom Helder Camara to a packed Leeds Town Hall or Bishop Donal Lamont from South Africa to memories of the recently deceased Tom Cullinan and others who have been prominent in the Justice & Peace movement. Equally, there have been so many visits from CAFOD partners over the years that have touched the lives of those they met.

Everyone is very welcome to bring along their own photographs and other memorabilia.

Please email jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk or Leeds@cafod.org.uk to let us know you are coming so that we can cater properly for this event.

REFLECTION: To save your life you must lose it

St Oscar Romero



“Those who, in the biblical phrase, would save their lives—that is, those who want to get along, who don't want commitments, who don't want to get into problems, who want to stay outside of a situation that demands the involvement of all of us—they will lose their lives.

What a terrible thing to have lived quite comfortably, with no suffering, not getting involved in problems, quite tranquil, quite settled, with good connections politically, economically, socially—lacking nothing, having everything. To what good? They will lose their lives.”

UPDATES FROM THE NATIONAL JUSTICE & PEACE NETWORK (NJPN)



The retirement of Ann Kelly, the administrator of the National Justice and Peace Network of England and Wales (NJPN) for the past 12 years, was celebrated

recently by Network members at CAFOD's offices in London.

There were warm tributes to her wide-ranging work - arranging meetings; networking with members and partner organisations; developing effective communications between members and the wider public; coordinating the annual conference and producing a newsletter and e-bulletins regularly - all guided and supported by the Executive Committee of NJPN. In addition, she is active in Justice and Peace in her own diocese of Birmingham.

Ann's replacement is Geoff Thompson. Geoff is active in the Faith and Justice Group of St Wilfred's Jesuit Parish in Preston. His experience includes being part of a Benedictine lay community, CAFOD volunteering and annual olive picking in Palestine. Ann Kelly said: "I give a warm welcome to Geoff as he struggles to do the job in half the time", a reference to reduced hours, due to reduced finance available (a common problem as you will know from our own appeals!).

STATIONS
of the
CROSS
for Young People



Anne O'Connor of Shrewsbury Diocese has updated her '**Stations of the Cross for young people**'.

This provides a Justice & Peace slant on the traditional stations and can be downloaded as a leaflet from the NJPN website:-

<https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/>



This is the title of the 2019 NJPN Annual Conference which, as usual, takes place at the Hays Conference Centre in Swanwick in Derbyshire.

This year the principal partner for the conference is **Church Action on Poverty** who are undertaking a three year project to challenge the Churches about where they put their resources. It will hear from 'communities of praxis' who are already involved on the margins, and engage in social analysis and theological reflection from the perspective of those on the margins.

The NJPN invitation says:

Join us in 2019 to explore mission, theological reflection and social action with people who have been pushed to the margins of society by poverty. How can we build churches that.

- are interested in building the kingdom, not growing the church;
- listen to voices from the margins
- expect to be challenged and changed by our neighbours,
- put an emphasis on sharing food and hospitality;
- are hungry and thirsty for justice.

It's not cheap to attend the conference but bursaries are available for a number of people and you are guaranteed an interesting weekend meeting people from across the UK who share a passion for social justice. If you are unable to give up a whole weekend it is possible to just go along for the day on Saturday. See their website for more details and the booking procedure.



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EVENTS

 Feb 25 to Mar 10	<p>FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 2019 Cocoa will be the focus for 2019. So the voices and stories of women farmers will also be at the heart of the messages. Download the Fairtrade Foundation’s Action Guide by going to the Fairtrade Foundation’s website- http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/</p>
 Sun 03 Mar	<p>CHURCH ACTION ON POVERTY SUNDAY - National An opportunity to reflect on poverty in our liturgies and to take action. See the CAP website for resources and ideas about what to do http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday</p>
 Wed 06 Mar	<p>J&P COMMISSION PLANNING AFTERNOON 1pm to 4:30pm An afternoon for the Commission with the help of friends to look to the year ahead and what we should focus on, given our limited resources. If you would like to contribute to this afternoon please email the office for more details</p>
 Fri 15 Mar	<p>CAFOD LENT APPEAL FAMILY FAST DAY - National As usual, CAFOD have some great resources on their website to help parishes take part in their Lenten appeal. Please think about what you could do in your parish.</p>
 Tue 19 Mar	<p>FILM SHOWING: THE CLAIM – about the life of St Oscar Romero <i>Emmanuel Chaplaincy Centre, University of Leeds (Nr the Parkinson Clock Tower) 6pm</i> Students missed out when we showed this film in November and Fr Peter Kravos has arranged for Julian Filochowski from the Romero Trust to come and give another presentation of it. All are welcome to go along and see it - it’s good!</p>
 Sat 30 Mar	<p>J&P Day of Reflection: Caring for our Common Home <i>SS John Fisher & Thomas More, Bradford Road, Burley in Wharfedale LS29 7PX 10:00-4pm</i> A day of prayer, some short inputs, discussion and time for personal reflection about our place in God’s creation and our responsibilities towards looking after our common home. Please email jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk to book a place.</p>
 Fri 05 Apr	<p>‘LOOKING BACK’ LENT LUNCH <i>J&P Office / CAFOD Volunteer Centre 11:30 to 14:00 – drop in</i> Come and spend some time to have a simple lunch and bring back memories of CAFOD and J&P events and people - everyone welcome and especially welcome to bring along your own photos and other memorabilia.</p>
 Fri 26 Jul – Sun 28 Jul	<p>NJPN ANNUAL CONFERENCE: FORGOTTEN PEOPLE, FORGOTTEN PLACES <i>The Hayes Conference Centre Swanwick, Derbyshire</i> A weekend of keynote speakers, workshops and a Justice ‘Fair’ to help us reflect on how to become a ‘Church of the Poor’. See https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/</p>
 Find us on Facebook	<p>Follow us on Facebook to help keep up to date with the key campaigns that the Commission is supporting.</p>

Please forward this email E-News onto anyone else who you think might be interested. Even better, get them to send us their email address so we can add them to our contact database.

See our website for full details of these and other events that may be of interest