

BHAKTIVEDANTA MANOR

NEWSLETTER

August 2018



International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)

Founder Acharya His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

50th London Rathayatra





Srila Prabhupada:

happiness of humanity at the cost of the lives of poor animals. That is not recommended herein. This verse clearly says that one should be compassionate to all living entities. Regardless of whether human, animal, tree or plant, all living entities are sons of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Srimad Bhagavatam 6.10.9 purport



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‘SUPERB’ OPEN DAY

The annual Open Day held on Saturday 7th July was described as ‘superb’. In the middle of a heat-wave, Bhaktivedanta Manor received a steady stream of guests throughout the day, many of them for the first time. Devotees from across the entire community teamed together to ensure the best experience for everyone. Guests enjoyed tours, ox-cart rides, ‘Meet the Monks’, a free veggie lunch and kirtans. Inside were ongoing hatha yoga sessions, reflexology and ‘drumfullness’ workshops (‘mindfulness’ with percussion by Jayadeva das!)

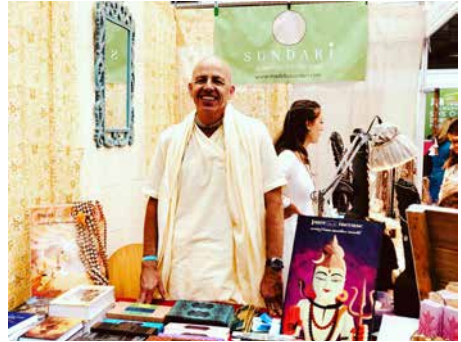
Meanwhile, children were also treated to henna decoration, face-painting, a bouncy castle and the very popular Children’s Yoga sessions in the George Harrison Garden!

Balaram Nityananda das reflected, “We were off to a great start, after chanting

the Hare Krishna mantra on the BBC Three Counties Radio Breakfast Show during an interview about the Open Day!

“The energy, vibrations and team-work on the day was exemplary. We really had the best attendance we could ever hope for because guests were so interested to learn more that they renounced watching a crucial England World Cup match!”





Pop-up Temple at Kensington Olympia

This year's "Wellbeing Mind Body Spirit Expo" took place at Kensington Olympia last May.

Kirtan London devotees organised a pop-up temple and Ananda Monet led kirtan on the main festival stage. The chorus comprised a talented team of Manor School alumni. As well as hosting kirtans, the pop-up Temple ran mantra meditation workshops, and no less than 400 of Srila Prabhupada's books were distributed.



North Bushey Fair

Local devotees became a popular feature at the recent North Bushey Fair as they distributed popular free vegetarian meals throughout the day and added to the spirit of the occasion.

"It was an incredibly successful event and I wanted to extend my thanks to everyone for being a part of it and making it what it was!" said Beverley from the Fair Coordination Team.

New Visitors and Tours Manager

This year we have a dedicated devotee to focus on tours, Purushottama das has been welcomed as the new head of the department.

"We are here every day from 11am till 4pm to deliver a wonderful first-time experience at Bhaktivedanta Manor. Please inform your friends and relatives who might want to come," explained Purushottama das.



Book Distribution Festival with Vaisesika das

On Saturday 30th June there was a very special Monthly Sankirtan Festival, with guest Vaisesika das.

Vaisesika das delivered an inspirational talk to a wide range of community devotees on the importance of distributing and studying Srila Prabhupada's books. Then, sixty participants descended on the unsuspecting Watford town centre

to give out books, prasada (food), hari nama chanting processions and sit-down bhajans. Later everyone congregated at Cassiobury Park to associate and share experiences and realisations.

Vaisesika das travels widely to teach the tenets of devotional service and the great art of distributing Srila Prabhupada's books.



Hare Krishna Festival Team on non-stop tour across the UK

So far this year, members of the Hare Krishna UK Festival Team have participated in a staggering 60 events, including a cocktail of mini festivals, chanting processions, Ratha Yatras, Mind Body and Spirit events and Padayatras (walking festivals).

Another 26 events will follow this year, leading to a total of 86 by this November.



HARE KRISHNA FILM PLAYS ACROSS UK

An inspiring film depicting the life and teachings of Srila Prabhupada was released in cinemas across the UK. Hare Krishna! The Mantra, The Movement, and the Swami who started it all was premiered at the Odeon Covent Garden last April.

The internationally-acclaimed documentary film uses never-seen-before archives, Srila Prabhupada's own words, and interviews with scholars and his early followers, and takes the audience behind-the-scenes of a movement born in the artistic scene of New York's Bowery, the hippie mecca of Haight Ashbury, and the Beatlemania of London, to find out more about the Swami who started a worldwide revolution in consciousness.

Director, Yadubar das, and Co-Director, Visakha dasi, spoke at many of the screenings. Audiences included celebrities such as the singers Boy George and Patti Boulaye, as well as a host of dignitaries and senior devotees.

'Hare Krishna! What a moving and insightful film!' declared Patti Boulaye, "I learned a lot about the power of God-led spirit and meditation, as well as that age should never stand in the way of one's destiny and service to God, as Srila Prabhupada has proven".

Following the Premiere, there were further screenings across Greater London and more than 20 other major locations in cities across the UK.

**HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE
HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE**



KIRTAN LONDON'S SUMMER OF SUCCESS

This year, Kirtan London is reaching out even wider than ever before with many more outreach kirtan (music) events in London:

1. Mantra Lounge – Kirtan evenings in Covent Garden have become weekly in frequency since the beginning of the year, with 40-50 people attending every session.

2. Pop-up Temple at the Wellbeing Festival (Mind Body Spirit) in May:

- over 700 people participated in kirtan and japa meditation sessions;
- over 900 prasadam sweets distributed;
- 340 medium and 90 big books on spiritual topics sold, and
- over 300 sets of japa chanting beads have been given out to eager participants.

3. Kirtan at Triyoga - Since March 2018 the team have been running weekly sessions at Triyoga Shoreditch, one of

the branches of the prestigious yoga studio in London.

4. Barefoot in The Park – in July, the team held a big 6 Hour Kirtan and picnic at the Hyde Park Bandstand. Over 500 people attended throughout the day with many more passers-by enjoying the kirtans.

5. For those who want to dive deeper into the bhakti yoga philosophy and practice, study Bhagavad Gita and learn more about kirtan and its roots, we have developed special courses, residential retreats and monthly Bhakti Sanga (reading group).

We also continue to offer our guests regular day retreats at Bhaktivedanta Manor, with tours, workshops, kirtans and talks on bhakti-yoga (the yoga of devotion), as well as the quarterly 6 Hour Kirtan at the lovely Swiss Church in Covent Garden, which attracts 120-150 people each time.



The Peace Garden

Faith representatives and well-wishers from the local area joined the former Mayor of Watford Dorothy Thornhill to open the Watford Peace Garden in Cassiobury Park. The Garden was opened with the prayers and recitals from faith representatives. Bhaktivedanta Manor was represented by Radha Mohan das, who chanted Sanskrit mantras including the Hare Krishna mantra.

The event was organised by the Watford Interfaith Association.



Narendra Modi event

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Indian diaspora in London, where he also hosted a question and answer session. One of the organisers of the event was Manoj Ladwa who serves on the advisory board of the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council.

Vinay Tanna, Head of Manor Communications, represented ISKCON.



Eurovision Song Contest

Yashodamayi dasi (Leva Zasimauskait) represented Lithuania in the Eurovision Song Contest in Lisbon. She was encouraged to enter the competition by her spiritual master Sankarshan das Adhikari, who confirmed that Krishna consciousness can be spread in many different ways. She made it to the finals which was televised around the world.



Using social media to share Krishna's message

He's an entrepreneur, a master at business start-ups, a social media genius and a devotee. Ajita Das (Avelo Roy) shared his skills and experience with devotees, teaching them how to use social media to further spread Krishna consciousness.

Around fifty attendees gathered together at Bhaktivedanta Manor for the day-long course, which began with Ajita encouraging attendees to examine what they felt was the biggest challenge in today's society that Krishna consciousness could solve. Armed with these personal insights, participants were taught how to use that to create a wow factor around Krishna consciousness and tell people why they should care about it.

Attendees were also given a lesson in the science of persuasion, how to create content, and how to market it on social media in such a way that it leaves daily impressions on the mind.

The course was organised by Bhaktivedanta Manor's Communications team and assisted by the College of Vedic Studies.



Europe-wide communications event

Every year ISKCON devotees in the field of Communications across Europe meet together to associate, exchange ideas, share experiences and discuss common strategies

Mahaprabhu das from Radhadesh in Belgium, a dedicated leader who has been heading Communications Europe for over 10 years, was very excited to see the largest ever gathering, namely almost 50 people from 17 different countries, at this year's seminars.

Gauri das, Madhavi dasi, Devaki dasi and Radha Mohan das represented the UK.

As well as national reports, the seminar included a series of imaginative workshops and discussions on subjects including social media (by Ajita das), 'the rise of Veganism', and the role of women in ISKCON.

Madhavi dasi explained she was "very inspired to see the devotees on how they responded and participated on such a sensitive issue as the position of women in ISKCON."

Devaki dasi was selected to be a member of a team of three Directors of Communications in Europe (NGO).



50TH CHARIOT FESTIVAL CELEBRATED IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE

Sunday 24th June marked the 50th ISKCON Ratha Yatra festival in London, whereby the deities are treated to a chariot procession through the major streets of Central London.

The grand procession left South Carriage Drive, Hyde Park, and arrived at Trafalgar Square in great devotional pomp and splendour. The famous square was brimming with people, and the festival prospered on a blisteringly hot afternoon.

"The first London Rathayatra was held in 1969," explained coordinator Titiksu das, "Six pioneering American devotees came to London to establish a temple to bring others to Krishna by the chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra.

"In the early months of 1969, before they had managed to establish a

temple, Shymasundara das had carved the beautiful deities of Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra. And so it was, in July that year, that the first London Rathayatra proceeded from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square. This was a historic milestone.

"Over the years, the festival has grown in size to more than 5,000 people on the procession, 3 chariots, and 20,000 plates of meals distributed!

"For me, the 50th is an opportunity to reflect on ISKCON's mission to bring others to Krishna, and to see how we can optimise the festival to that end. Specifically, how we can better give books, prasadam (spiritual food) and Hari Nama (the chanting of Krishna's names) to the people of London."



Oxford Centre of Hindu Studies celebrates 20th Anniversary

The Oxford Centre of Hindu Studies (OCHS) celebrated its 20th Anniversary Dinner at the Oxford Town Hall, which included lecturers, academics, Research Fellows, Patrons, staff and well-wishers.

Representatives from Bhaktivedanta Manor also attended the event, and presented the OCHS Director Shaunaka Rishi das with a devotional painting.

The Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies is a Recognised Independent Centre of the University of Oxford, England. [The Centre is engaged in developing academic programmes of education, research and publishing in the field of Hindu studies. The Centre also aims to encourage the Hindu community in the academic study of their own traditions and cultures.

More information: www.ochs.org.uk



ISKCON UK and NHS in joint care initiative

A joint initiative between ISKCON UK and the SWAN end of life scheme was launched at a conference in the ISKCON Temple in Leicester. SWAN offers dedicated support to patients in the last days of life and to their families into bereavement and beyond. The SWAN scheme is a national programme which is present in 47 Trusts across the country. It was set up by Fiona Murphy MBE, the assistant director of Nursing at the Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust.

The conference was attended by around fifty nurses and doctors, many of them practising devotees of Krishna, and everyone felt the concepts discussed were helpful. Sukanti Radha dasi, a nurse, was the organiser of the conference and ISKCON's National Office was represented by Praghosa das.

Key speakers from ISKCON included Kripa Moya das who presented "Journey of the Soul", and Nila Madhava das, who spoke about last rites and funeral services.

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Sounds for the soul in Birmingham

This year's most highly attended national kirtan event, organised by the Birmingham 24 Hour Kirtan team, took place over the May Day holiday weekend. Special guest singers included Sacinandana Swami, Agnidev das and Madhava das.



Bathing Jagannath

Two weeks before London Ratha Yatra, the ISKCON-London temple organised a wonderful Snana Yatra festival. With over 1000 devotees who took part, it is clearly growing in popularity. Snana Yatra is a bathing festival when the deities Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra are brought out from the shrine and are ceremonially bathed.



Cassiobury Park

Mid July there was music, mantra and meditation at Cassiobury Park's bandstand as a wide range of local devotees took part.



Basingstoke Hindu Society

The Basingstoke Hindu Society were completely spellbound by the Bhaktivedanta Player's performance of the Mahabharat in the town.



Spiritual retreats

The College of Vedic Studies (CVS) is now organising no less than 6 retreats a year.

There have been five retreats since last September, including Buckland Hall in Wales, Radhadesh Temple in Belgium and the Goloka Dham temple in Germany.

Retreat attendees have a chance to immerse themselves in the daily practice of Krishna Consciousness and the association of devotees, away from the mundane routines of life.

Asha Bhimji shares her experience:

"My highlight over the last few years has been the CVS retreat to the Goloka Dham temple in Germany. The association of the devotees, in particular a great luminary like Sacinandana Swami, and the level of immersion away from the stress of work was magical for me. That's the beauty of retreats; there is a great mix of amazing locations, creative programs, association of other devotees as well as plenty of free- time to do your own thing!"



Mantra Therapy Retreat to Scenic Hungary

Mantra Therapy, the dynamic, contemporary Sanga Group for professionals, celebrated its 8th Anniversary with a special Spiritual Retreat at the beautiful New Vraja Dham in Hungary.

28 attendees, many on their first ever retreat, embraced Bhakti Yoga, immersing themselves in Temple programmes, Motivational Workshops, Meditation, Martial Arts, Hiking, and signature Mantra Therapy style Kirtans.

The group were also blessed with a special seminar by Sivarama Swami, and got to experience the "simple living, higher thinking" way of life at Krishna Valley first-hand.

The relaxing excursions to different places, including the majestic Lake Balaton, resulted in a noticeable transformation in the hearts, habits and thinking of the attendees. It was certainly a magnificent miracle to witness!

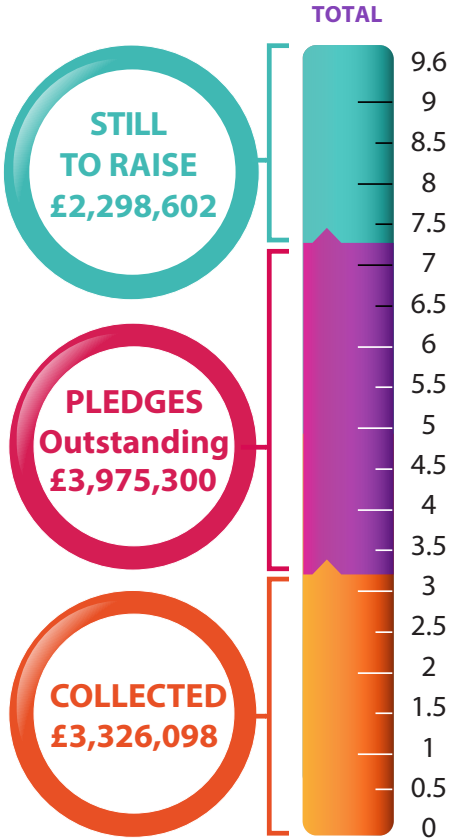
Mantra Therapy continues to serve the UK professional community by making spirituality relevant, accessible and applicable, through its regular workshops and retreats.

SRI KRISHNA HAVELI PROJECT UPDATE



Construction work on Bhaktivedanta Manor’s new Haveli has begun and is in full swing with a date of completion for Janmashtami 2019.

- The Primary school & Preschool have been relocated.
- Radharanis bakery has been relocated.
- New access roads to car parks are in use.
- New greenhouses for Tulasi devi are completed
- The Site perimeter has been erected for construction
- Over 100 truck-loads of subsoil has been removed to level the site
- Foundations for the building has been laid
- Drainage has been installed
- Walls around the cottage have been erected to secure the stability of the building
- Concrete slabs for the main buildings have been laid





- Our Heartfelt thanks to all who have pledged their support for this historic project.
- A further £2.3 million is required.
- We need another 154 families to give just £4 a day for 10 years.
- Alone we can do little, together with Krishna's grace we can do so much.

Make a Difference
 give £4 per day, to get us rest of the way

To contribute towards the Shree Krishna Haveli, Contact Vaisnava das:
haveli@krishnatemple.com - 07907 809 006 - www.krishnatemple.com/haveli



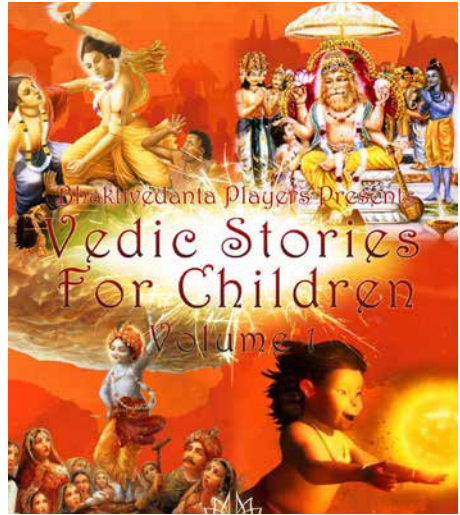


Will Artificial Intelligence take over the world?

What are the long-term threats to society posed by Artificial Intelligence (AI)? Will they come to dominate us? But, even before that, can we allow them to make life-and-death decisions? What does it mean to augment humans beyond natural physical and mental limits? These were the questions posed by a multi-faith consultancy event: Faith and AI organised at the St George's Centre at Windsor Castle.

Faith representatives, including Akhandadhi das, met with Gila Sacks, the government's Director for Digital and Tech Policy along with other top academics in the field of AI. The aim was to consider the implications of the growing use of AI in many decision-making aspects of our lives. Some of these seemed alarming, and the group suggested that we may not be developing our policies of ethics quickly enough to keep pace therewith.

Many of the participants had fascinating insights, and it is hoped that in follow-up sessions a broad understanding of the unique nature of what we call human consciousness can be formulated.



Vedic Stories for Children - Audio CD

The Bhaktivedanta Players came together to take parents and children on a journey like no other in the form of a new audio CD "Vedic Stories for Children". It was launched at Bhaktivedanta Manor on Lord Nrsimhadev's Appearance Day festival.

Leaving behind the stage for a recording studio, Bhaktivedanta Players bring to life classical tales of the ancient Vedic scriptures with their usual gusto, in audio story form.

"Give your children the very best start in life by immersing them in key lessons on virtue, bravery, tolerance, devotion and compassion...themes explored in these wonderful stories," said Rupa Manohara das.

"Feedback has been very encouraging," explained Director Jaya Krishna das, "So much so in fact that we are already working on volume 2!"



Local Council laud community charity achievements

The charity 'Gratitude' recently celebrated its 5th anniversary with a special event attracting senior devotees, members of Hertsmere Council, representatives of contributing local supermarkets, charity representatives and other well-wishers.

Gratitude saves food from waste and

uses it to benefit people in need in the local community via social gatherings that are educational in terms of healthy lifestyle and waste awareness. Their main outlet is St. Theresa parish hall in Borehamwood, where they run weekly community cooking and sharing.



Cows and bulls joyfully roam spring pastures

Due the excessively wet weather in March, the initial date for the ceremonial 'letting of the cows' into pastures green was delayed. However, in the end, a fine spring morning was chosen, and the event received its highest ever attendance.

As well as the bullock-cart carrying the ceremonial deities, an arati, and an explanation about the significance of cows in Vedic culture, there was also a practical demonstration of training



Calf born to prize-winning pedigree

The latest addition at the New Gokul farm is a female calf born to Hemala, a donated cow. The mother is a prize-winning pedigree and her attributes and calibre are very clearly present in her generational offspring.

"Hemala is a very warm, friendly and exceptionally well-natured cow," explained Farm Manager Jaya Krishna. "Temple President Srutidharma das named the calf Janaki!"



Ladies' Away Day

Once a month, the ladies' residence (ashram) at the Manor, organises team-building activities for the residents. In spirit of the theme "Keeping it Spiritual", the ashram split into groups and each chose one of the three different aspects of Sadhana (spiritual practice), Sanga (association) and Samraksha (cow protection):

Sadhana - we read, discussed and reflected on some of the prayers of Queen Kunti and sang kirtan on a specially organised ashram away day.

Sanga - Siddhi-lalasa dasi facilitated a Q&A to address and advise us on challenges faced along one's spiritual journey.

Samraksha - The wonderful New Gokul farm team facilitated a visit from the residents; they fed, groomed, massaged, sang to and gave time, attention and love to the beautiful cows.

Other initiatives included:

- 'Quote of the Week' on the ashram noticeboard, sharing meditative gems to inspire introspective reading;
- Recycling to actively reduce waste.
- and
- Once a month coming together to watch a movie with a spiritual theme.



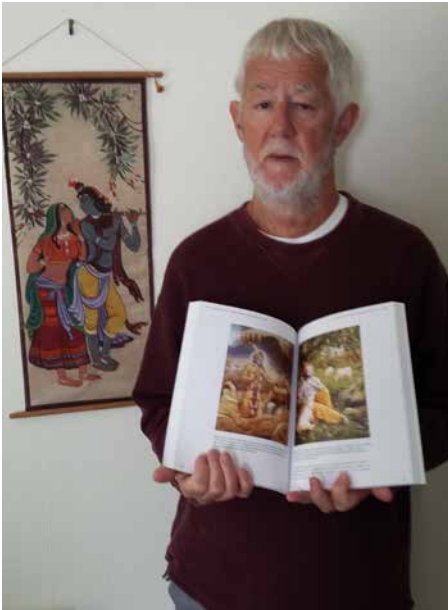
Celebrating the half-man, half-lion incarnation of God

This year's celebration of the advent of Nrsimhadev was a splendid all-day affair on Sat 28th April. It included a song by Manor schoolchildren, a drama by Krishna Club (directed by Jaya Krishna), a class by Vraja Bihari das and a sacred fire ceremony designed to invite the blessings of the Lord in his lion-like form.

The afternoon included a huge hari nama procession in London and the bathing of a sacred image of Lord Nrsimhadev

Then followed a drama by Bhaktivedanta Players, featuring a particularly scary depiction of Lord Nrsimhadev, but to the relief of the children in the audience, the hero Prahlad tamed him with his devotion!





Transcendental Art in ISKCON

With the help of Bhaktivedanta Manor, in a new academic documentary Professor Gwilym Beckerlegge explores the importance of sacred books and 'transcendental art' in the life of ISKCON. The film is now part of the teaching materials of 'Exploring Religion' - the Open University's latest introductory course in the study of religions. The film and the associated book are linked to the part of the course that examines religious texts, including oral traditions and art as well as sacred books.

Professor Gwilym Beckerlegge is a member of the Department of Religious Studies at The Open University whose work centres on the study of contemporary Hindu movements.



Avanti House explores Faith Ethos

Teachers and staff from the Avanti House Secondary School in Stanmore came to the Manor for a special presentation by Navin Krishna das (Nitesh Gor). Nitesh who is the Founder and Chief Executive, Avanti Schools Trust, explained "The purpose was to explore the faith ethos of Avanti schools."

All the attendees then received first class hospitality provided by the Visitors and Tours team and kitchen crew.

ISKCON is the faith affiliate for the Avanti Schools.

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Devotee awarded British Empire Medal

Acyuta Charan das, based in South London, manages a vegetarian food charity for homeless people, and was awarded a British Empire Medal (BEM) in the New Year's Honours list. The award category was for voluntary and charitable services to homeless people in the area.

For ten years he has been heading up food distribution for the charity Food For Life while also working as a Home

Office accountant at Lunar House in Croydon. "I wasn't expecting it at all!" responded Acyuta, "We serve all meals from a pop-up table and if it's raining we operate from a van. I just get on with my service; I don't expect to be nominated for awards.

The Medal was presented to Acyuta at Tower Hill, Central London, by the Lord Lieutenant of Greater London, Mr Ken Olisa OBE.



Devotees attend Royal Reception

Kripa Moya das and Sita Rama das were guests of HRH Prince Andrew at a reception to welcome inter-faith representatives of the Emir of Bahrain. The event was held in a venue adjacent to St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. Krish Raval, director of the Senior Faith Leadership Programme spoke on the importance of religious understanding between traditions.

Clergy from Windsor Castle and the Dean of Windsor were also present.