

Faith Junction



Third quarter report:

Art Beyond Belief's "Faith Junction" project sets out to achieve video interviews across the four major faiths represented in Slough and the surrounding areas. These faiths are Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Christianity.

The process of recording the twenty four video interviews has now been completed, finished in mid-December. Interviews took place at the Hindu Temple, Sikh Gurdwara, Mosque, and various Churches in Slough, as well as at some private homes. The experience has exceeded all expectations and all faiths have called for this project to be a beginning of something altogether bigger. At the end of interviews, people have exchanged phone numbers or even arranging dinner together, and it has been suggested that the sessions for viewing the final edits should be "bring a dish" afternoons or evenings.

The editing will take place during January and February. Each finished interview is scheduled to be fifteen to twenty minutes long, although in some cases there are two hours of recording to be condensed. Art Beyond Belief's project manager, David Sparrow says "The interviews have been very involved, and it has been a difficult decision whether to cut filming time or allow it to run on. Generally, I have let things run, because the dialogue has been so interesting that it seemed wasteful *not* to record it. It will make the editing more time-consuming, but I believe that is a price worth paying. Some of the interviews are quite extraordinary; our policy of spending the first few months gathering the participants, then running the interview workshops has certainly paid off; it was surprising how cameraderie developed during the workshops, and has continued throughout the interviews".

Video interviews were recorded with huge enthusiasm from all those taking part



Iffat Khan, interviewed at the Stoke Poges Lane Mosque by Richard and Mary Hall.



Slough's faith communities were generous in providing venues for the interviews - though conditions were sometimes a little cramped! (above).

Paula Pickering (right, Christian) with husband Paul interviewed Jagroop Singh (below, Sikh) and his wife Kamaljit. Says Paula "I think Christians could benefit amazingly from adopting principles from Sikhism. We have a lot more in common with these two Sikhs than I would have with many people of my own faith."



Lynda Bussley (left, Christian), who was interviewed by Satish Sharma (below, Hindu) says, "I have been enlightened by Satish; it's made me think that I'd like to further the discussions. It's made me more confirmed in my own faith, but I want to explore the ideas of others."





Margaret Innes (above, Christian)
"It concentrates your mind. It's drawn out what I really think, what I really believe. Rather than soldiering on day after day, Sunday after Sunday, without really thinking - what it is you stand for, what you believe, what you want everybody to experience."



Poonam Chopra (above, Hindu)
"This was definitely a very good learning curve for me. Having a Muslim as a best friend, I knew a lot about the religion itself, but faith and core beliefs have only just come out now in this interview. It has been a big eye-opener. And other faiths are not always as the media portrays them. I have learnt a lot and it has really helped."

Imran Yousuf (right, Muslim)
"Communication is the only way to resolve problems, whether you are giving out or receiving. I have had to be very careful not to give the wrong impression of Islam to other Muslims and also other faiths. Because what I am giving are my own thoughts about Islam and I know my thoughts are a bit different to mainstream Islam. I hope I can melt the ice between Islam and the other faiths and I hope it will encourage other Muslims to think about their own faith, understand it better and act it out accordingly."

"These two are an asset to society" - Saqib Javaid (Muslim)



Saqib Javaid (left, Muslim) says of Vivek & Nikesh Sharma (above, Hindu),
"These two are an asset to society. They have explained their faith with great clarity and intelligence. I have only one reservation and that is their age. They have not experienced the hard knocks of life and because of this their faith is largely untested. I would love to repeat this interview in 10 years."



Amarjeet Bhamra (above, Sikh)
"Sitting here asking questions has for me been an inspiration. Because all the topics we covered have been answered in the same fashion as I might have answered. It really goes to show how much commonality, how many thoughts and ideas these groups share with each other."





*Cryton Sijaona (above, Christian)
"I have enjoyed sharing knowledge with one another."*

*Crytonia Sijaona (below, Christian)
"I have been surprised that how much is the same [between Christianity and Islam]. It is just the forms of worship that are different. But we all believe in one God, which is great."*



*Arshad Gamiet (above, Muslim)
"It has been a great privilege to participate in this programme. Whichever way God has chosen to reveal himself, the message is the same. Love your fellow human beings. Be kind and gentle with one another. We are all imperfect and forgetful creatures who need to call one another to remember God and our duties. It has been a great privilege working with this team and good things and positive outcome are something that we can look forward to."*



*Mariam Gamiet (above, Muslim)
"It has been a wonderful opportunity for me, because while asking the questions I have to reflect on them and in getting the answers, I felt very privileged to hear how much we had in common and how much there is a message of love and understanding and forgiveness. I feel that if at our level as grandmother and mother with a young couple who have just started their children, if we can find such a lot of common ground (and my heart has warmed to this couple, Cryton and Crytonia), I feel that there is hope. I feel that we can multiply this over and over with so many people. We have a message of hope to spread."*



*Paul Pickering (above, Christian)
"I hadn't thought too much about the name given to this series of dialogues until I was listening to the experiences of Sikhism and 'Faith Junction' is marvelous, as a metaphor, of them 'coming together'; as a point for various faiths. It is a really nice image as well as an experience. It recognizes differences and similarities and realizes that whole ranges of difference and similarity can come to a point. It may back off and go in other directions or it may stay at that point for a while. But it is a lovely image. I also like the idea of the process described here, when we interviewed the Sikhs. Faith is a process; it is something we learn about in relation to who we are, for as long as we can engage with it. And that process was really, really nicely unpacked with the questions we were given. I want to thank you for the experience. It was marvellous."*