

Opening Reflection by Richard Knott Children and Youth Development Officer

A Crowning Conundrum

I wonder how you are feeling about the Coronation this weekend?

Perhaps you are really excited to witness such a historic event and have had the red, white and royal blue bunting up for weeks? Maybe your church is hosting some kind of tea party or celebration as part of the wider community festivities? Perhaps you are more than a little bemused or even irritated by the whole thing, seeing it as a relic from the past and a waste of valuable financial resources (an estimated 50-100 Million pounds) during a cost-of-living crisis? Perhaps you are just a bit underwhelmed by it all and don't quite understand what all this fuss is about, but quietly happy to have an additional day off work/school/college/university?



I have been thinking on the principle of a Monarchy and wondering how we might reflect theologically on the Coronation of an earthly King, when as a Church we hold allegiance to a different kind of authority? Thinking also about many in younger generations who are deeply suspicious of anything that claims authority and challenges or even objects to anything with a sense of privilege, especially when it is purely based on a birth right. We might well ask how do we understand the idea of a monarchy in terms of social justice, equality, diversity and inclusion? Perhaps it is our non-conformist tradition that prompts some of us to question the idea of swearing an oath of allegiance to an earthy Monarch or institution?

How do we understand Biblical and theological terms such as the Kingdom of God/Heaven, the rule and reign of God or the proclamation of Christ as King of Kings and Prince of Peace? Are these terms and understandings also in danger of being 'out of date', based on an ancient Patriarchal system that is unfit for our modern society and obnoxious to current generations? Might we need to rethink or at least reframe our understanding of God and Jesus to better connect with others who might find this language and framing of our Lord and Saviour difficult and experience these as a barrier to fully discovering God's Shalom?

There are of course many examples of monarchies in the Scriptures: some are better than others! A personal favourite is that of the King Josiah, who became King at eight years old. At that age it is recorded

that, **“He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord”** (2 Kings 22:2a). What an amazing commendation. Whatever our thoughts and feelings might be about **King Charles III**, we might pray that this would also be how he lives and reigns.



What might doing what is right in the eyes of the Lord look like also for us? Only we can answer that for ourselves, as we seek to know Jesus and make Him known in and through our own lives and churches in our communities. Perhaps we can be willing to learn some lessons from those like Josiah, those eight-year-olds in our lives, who might just be able to point us towards the one who said, **“Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me”** (Matthew 18:3-5).

Whatever your view on the Coronation and the Monarchy might be, I know that we will continue to treat one another with humility, respect, care and love, perhaps especially those who may have opposing views to our own about this event. It is the Jesus way after all.

Marking the Coronation

The United Reformed Church has published a prayer for **Their Majesties the King and Queen** as they are crowned at Westminster Abbey this Saturday, 6 May 2023.

**Eternal God,
You order and govern our world and all that is therein,
bless, we pray, Charles and Camilla today
as they are crowned and anointed,
that amid the pomp and ritual,
they may feel your loving presence,
that they may fulfil the roles prescribed for them,
and that we may, in this kingdom, be better governed,
and always reminded of your eternal Kingdom which is to
come.
Amen.**



The full article, which can be found at <https://urc.org.uk/coronation-day-urc-prays-for-king-and-queen/>, states:

In our contemporary society, and certainly within our congregations, there are a variety of views on the monarchy, yet we can unite in wishing Their Majesties The King and Queen well today.

We pray that they will feel God's presence as they are anointed and throughout His Majesty's reign. We hope that they will use their office well and use their voices at the centre for those on the margins of our bitterly divided society. We pray that His Majesty The King reminds us of the importance of spirituality and religion in the lives of our nations. Above all, the URC commends their Majesties, The King and Queen, to God's care and protection.

We are always pleased to share news of special events in churches around the East Midlands Synod. If your church is holding or hosting something notable, including any celebrations of the Coronation of King Charles III, we would be glad to include words and photos (subject to permission) in this e-letter. Please email trainingpa@urc5.org.uk and training@urc5.org.uk.

Around the East Midlands Synod

Gainsborough URC opens for West Lindsey Churches Festival

Saturday 13 – Sunday 14 May

Gainsborough URC will open for the West Lindsey Churches Festival over the weekend of **13-14 May 2023**, 10.00am-3.00pm on Saturday and 1.00-4.00pm on Sunday. Eighty-six churches in West Lindsey will welcome visitors over the two weekends of the festival, of which Gainsborough URC is the only United Reformed Church. For further information, visit www.churchesfestival.info.



The church has a fascinating history, having been built as a memorial to **John Robinson**, 'pastor' of the Mayflower Pilgrims in 1897. There is a permanent all-age exhibition telling the story of John Robinson and the Pilgrims and the history surrounding the building of the church. A booklet recounting the history is available at a cost of £3.

The two manual pipe organ is a striking feature of the church. It was built by Forster and Andrews and is an instrument of national heritage importance.

On Saturday, **Gillian Poucher** will be joined by other local authors including **Alice White** (author of 'Reflections From a Narrowboat'), **Harriet Innes** (author of 'The Chronograph') and **Bryony Wood** (author of 'The Sound of Musings'). All will be happy to chat about writing, with books available to purchase. As always, tea, coffee and delicious cakes will be available in the café!

Poppy, pride of Chesterfield

We send our congratulations to **Poppy Thorpe** of **St Andrew's URC**, Chesterfield, whose Bible reading was one of the highlights of last month's **Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving** marking the 50th Jubilee of the United Reformed Church.

Twelve-year-old Poppy commanded London's Westminster Central Hall with immense assurance. Another member of her congregation at St Andrew's, **Helen Lidgett**, writes, "She did St Andrew's and East Midlands Synod as well as her own family proud with her grace, poise and clarity of diction and expression."

[Poppy's reading](#) of **Ephesians 4:1-16** was apt for a service reminding us of the URC's dedication to unity:

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. (*Verses 4-6.*)



Along with her parents and sister, Poppy was one of a sizeable contingent from North Derbyshire attending the special commemoration, alongside numerous others from all parts of the East Midlands. Our Synod was also represented from the podium by the **Revd John Reardon** of Newport Pagnell URC, former Moderator of General Assembly and General Secretary of the Council of Churches for Britain & Ireland, who led the [reading](#) of the Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the URC.

The full celebration can still be enjoyed at: <https://urc.org.uk/who-we-are/our-50th-anniversary/service-of-thanksgiving/>. You can also skip directly to Poppy's contribution [here](#) and John's [here](#).

Personal News

It is with great sadness that we bring news of the deaths of the following servants of the Church. We give thanks to God for all that has been achieved through their lives and ministries.

In the **East Midlands Synod** we are sad to bring you the news of the death of our retired minister the **Revd Michael Forster** on Sunday 23 April. Michael's ministries were: in Baptist Ministry up to 1993; at Anstey 1997-2002; and in Hospital Chaplaincy 1994-2011. Michael was also a prolific writer whose hymns are sung around the world.

A thanksgiving service for Michael's life will be held at **Loughborough URC** on Monday 15 May at 12.30pm. All are welcome to attend. This will be preceded by a private family cremation at the crematorium. Our thoughts and prayers are with Michael's wife and all who held him dear.

We also regret to inform you of the death of our retired minister the **Revd Anthony Jones**, known as **Tony**, overnight on 27/28 April. Tony's ministries were: Feltham (1971-73); with Christian Aid (1973-76); at Banbury School (1977-83); Silcoates School (1983-2007); and Wakefield Methodist Church (2007-12).

The details of Tony's funeral are not yet known: please enquire via the Synod Office. Our thoughts and prayers are with Tony's wife and all who held him dear.

Wanted: Training & Development Advocates

Are you enthusiastic about helping church members develop as disciples? Could you act as a point of contact with East Midlands Synod about training needs and opportunities? Then please consider acting as a **Training & Development Advocate** for your church or area.



The Synod's **Training & Development** group and its convenor the **Revd Dr Gillian Poucher** are seeking to recruit at least one person in every Resource Area to receive news of upcoming events and ensure that they are shared at the local level with all those who might be interested. We want to offer the right practical support and enrichment to all church members: a network of Advocates will help us do just that.

Advocates would also bring back any development needs and requests for the Synod team to consider. Ideally, we hope that they would be able to attend an annual meeting each autumn to share ideas – but the main thing is to act as a contact to publicise training opportunities, without committing to a demanding new responsibility.

If your Resource Area or church has not yet nominated a Training & Development Advocate, please consider whether this might be a role for you or for someone you know. To volunteer, or simply to find out more, please contact **Derek Graham** (Training & Development Officer): email training@urc5.org.uk or call 07772 911449.

Faith Adventures for Children Together

Faith Adventures for Children Together is the new FREE resource for children's groups from the United Reformed Church **Children's and Youth Work** team. It is Bible based and released monthly as four stand-alone sessions designed to be relatively 'pick up and go'. In this video, members of the writing team take you through the new resource step by step, explaining why they have written it in the way they have and how you might use it to support you in your ministry with children and families or intergenerationally.

Praying – storytelling – wondering together – playing – laughing – making – cooking – exploring – singing - sharing

Free downloadable resource

Faith Adventures for Children Together
The new weekly Bible-based resource for children's groups from the URC



Walk through the resource with the writing team

Praying – storytelling – wondering together – playing – laughing – making – cooking – exploring – singing - sharing

[Faith Adventures for Children Together Walk through guide - YouTube](#)

Free Lecture: A Church for Gen 'A'

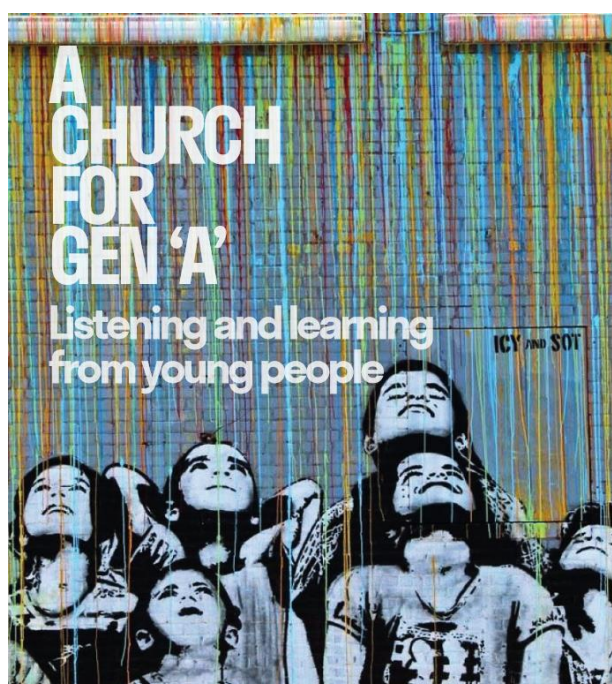
Monday 15 May 6.30-8.30pm

In person at St Mellitus College, London or online

Founded on the principle that Theology and Youth Work need one another, The **Youthscape/St Mellitus College Annual Lecture** for 2023 takes place on **Monday 15 May** at 6.30pm, entitled **A Church for Gen 'A'**.

The church thrives when it has young people as part of its community - but can we find space for a new generation who see themselves and the world differently? In the lecture, **Chloe Combi** shares her work listening to the voices of Gen A, and **Canon Chris Russell** helps reframe the urgent task of making room for young people in the church.

You can take part in the free lecture either by attending in person at St Mellitus College (London SW5) or by following the live stream.



For full details and to register, please [click here](#) to visit the Youthscape website.

This month: try our Quiet Day

Dale Abbey, Derbyshire
Saturday 27 May 10.00am-12.30pm



Register now for our free **Quiet Day** in the beautiful surroundings of **Dale Abbey**, nestled conveniently at the heart of our Synod between Derby, Loughborough and Nottingham.

The Quiet Day – or morning – will be led by the **Revd Ruth Allen**, who quite literally lives in the midst of the abbey ruins at the heart of the village and explains a little more of this fascinating location:

Dale Abbey is one of those places where the line between us and God can be called thin. It has such a long history of being steeped in prayer, and sometimes even totally sceptical visitors remark on the serenity and the peace of the place. It first hits the pages of history when a devout baker in Derby had a vision of the Virgin Mary, who told him to go and live in Depedale. He had no idea where Depedale was, but he set out anyway, and found himself in the village of Stanley, just a couple of miles away. There he heard a woman telling a girl to take the calves to Depedale, so he asked where it was, and was told to follow the girl - and the calves, presumably.

It was not surprising that he didn't know where Depedale was, because there was nothing here at that time (the mid-1100s) except a few caves. He made one into a dwelling with a little chapel at one end and lived out his days here. There's a lot more to the story, so do come along to the Quiet Morning, and I would be delighted to tell you the rest. And you can enjoy the peace and get closer to God through it too. You can even visit the cave....

Welcoming participants in the village's Gateway Centre, where free refreshments will be available, Ruth will offer a simple scriptural starting point before inviting you to meditate, wander, listen and pray, ending in time for lunch with a short time of sharing.

This is a short introductory Quiet Day experience, open to all and especially suitable for church members and leaders who want to take a few hours out of the busy-ness of being Church to rekindle their relationship with God. A slightly longer weekday Quiet Day will take place at **Heckington Fen**, Lincolnshire on **Tuesday 5 September** from 10.30am-3.30pm, led by the **Revd Jane Weedon**. To register free of charge for either event, simply email Hannah Holmes on trainingpa@urc5.org.uk or call the Synod Office.

URC Buildings Forum Webinar

Wednesday 24 May 11.30am – 1.00pm



The next webinar from **URC Buildings Forum** webinar, entitled **Our Buildings in Community**, takes place on **Wednesday 24 May** from 11.30am – 1.00pm. This is an opportunity to:

- meet **Roo Stewart**, the URC's Programme Officer for Church and Society
- hear from a range of local church projects about how they are using their church buildings to be a presence in the neighbourhood
- share your own experiences of setting up and running community-based activities
- get inspired and be encouraged to start something new!

For further information and to register your interest please email: mission@urc.org.uk including your name and email address and which church you belong to or are representing, if appropriate.

Please also save the date for the following online conference on **26 September 2023** from 8.00pm - 9.30pm, which will focus on environmental issues for church buildings and working towards Net Zero. Information about the Forum can be found at: www.urcbuildingsforum.co.uk

Revoluting Christians

4-6 JUNE 2023

JOIN ONLINE

Email for further details:
lindsey.brown@urc.org.uk



Fundación Protestante
Hora de Obrar
actalianza



**REVOLTING
(CHRISTIAN)**

FROM THEOLOGY TO ACTION
A global consultation to confront
**THE CLIMATE
EMERGENCY**

This hybrid, global, theological consultation will engage with liberative, practical responses to the fast-approaching, human-manufactured climate catastrophe. We ask how faith groups can and should be confronting racism, colonialism, education and exploitative economic systems underlying our climate chaos

Synod Enquirer's Day

Saturday 24 June , 10.00 – 12.30pm

at the Synod Meeting Room, Sherwood, Nottingham

Do you feel God is calling you to serve in some way, but you are not sure what? Or how? Then here is an opportunity to come along and hear people share stories and answer questions about a whole range of vocations in the United Reformed Church.

Elder

Children and Youth Worker

Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher

Locally Recognised Worship Leader



Pioneer

Chaplain

Minister of Word and Sacraments

Church Related Community Worker

Beginning and ending in prayer, this morning offers a relaxed, no-pressure space to explore what your own calling might be.



Stepwise Sampler



Saturday 24 June, 1.30 – 2.30pm

at the Synod Meeting Room, Sherwood, Nottingham

The same day, here's a great opportunity to find out how the URC's discipleship programme Stepwise can help you take your next steps in faith and to enjoy a short sample of the introductory stream Faith-Filled Life.



To book your place at one or both please email Hannah Holmes at the Synod Office: trainingpa@urc5.org.uk

Independent Faith Engagement Review

Colin Bloom's Independent Faith Engagement Review [Does government 'do God?'](#) was published on Wednesday 26 April.

Colin Bloom was appointed by former Prime Minister **Boris Johnson** to deliver the Independent Faith Engagement Review in September 2019. A call for evidence ran from November to December 2020, asking how those of all faiths, or none, perceive the government's engagement with faith organisations.

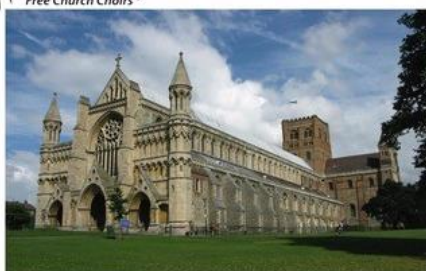
The review considers government's engagement with faith, people of faith and places of worship across a broad range of themes including faith literacy across public services, faith in education, prisons and the probation service, the UK Armed Forces, faith-based extremism, financial and social exploitation, and forced marriage.



More than 21,000 people responded to the public consultation and the report sets out 22 recommendations for government to consider. The key messages are that faith is an 'overriding force for good', that government needs to improve its engagement with these groups, and that a better understanding of faith will help government tackle systematic issues including forced marriages, child safeguarding and extremism.

You can find a link to the review [here](#), and the press notice issued by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities [here](#). The review is independent and does not represent government policy.

Festival of Church Music



Festival of Church Music
Will you be one of the singers
at
**The Cathedral and Abbey Church
of St Alban**
Saturday 14th October 2023

Festival Conductor - Peter J Williams
Organist - Rufus Frowde

Anthem Books available from January 2023
from Adrian Prisk, 15 Parklands Great Linford, MK14 5DZ
Tel: 01908 605815; Email aprisk@doctors.org.uk
Further details on the website
www.freechurchchoirs.org.uk

Saturday 14 October
St Albans Cathedral

"In Harmony" Free Church Choirs holds its 2023 **Festival of Church Music** at St Albans Cathedral on Saturday 14 October.

Rehearsals will start in the summer, so there is still time for singers to register. Anthem books are available from Adrian Prisk: email aprisk@doctors.org.uk

Full details of how to join this wonderful occasion are available on the website:

www.freechurchchoirs.org.uk

Situations Vacant



Personal Assistant

**Permanent contract
35 hours per week
Salary: £35,676**

Are you an experienced PA passionate about communication and organisation?

The role supports the Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Finance Officer, co-ordinating their work with various staff teams and that of the main committees of the Church.

You will have a vital role in seeing that they are properly supported in this busy schedule, acting as an administrative anchor, balancing a range of responsibilities confidentially and carefully. You will be part of a diverse team and your reliability as a team player will be key in enabling them to manage this work.

You are a highly organised, experienced PA with excellent communication and interpersonal skills. You have the ability to multi-task and work to tight deadlines, whilst maintaining a high level of accuracy and attention to detail. Being proactive with the ability to work without constant supervision is essential, with having the confidence to work to two managers. Confidentiality, sensitivity, and a thorough understanding of data protection principles are essential. Experience of using IT to manage diaries, projects and events would be a distinct advantage.

We can offer you a flexible and friendly work environment; hybrid working from Church House in London and from home.

If you are interested in working for us and can meet the above requirements, please contact us/see our website for an application form (noting that we do not accept CVs):

**Human Resources, the United Reformed Church, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT
020 7691 9871 recruitment@urc.org.uk www.urch.org.uk/vacancies**

Closing date for applications: 12 noon, Monday 22 May 2023 Interview date: Friday 9 June 2023



Repairs and Maintenance Surveyor London based with UK travel

**Permanent contract, 35 hours per week
Salary: Circa £60,000**

Are you a building surveyor with experience of social housing?

The United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society is a Community Benefit Society providing housing for church ministers in retirement. Our 280 properties are dispersed across England, Scotland, and Wales.

This key appointment will manage repairs and maintenance operations within a small team. You will play a crucial role in the review and efficient delivery of the asset management strategy, assessing properties for their ongoing suitability and specifying repairs and adaptations to meet the needs of elderly tenants. Managing planned maintenance forms an important part of the role, alongside the need to deal promptly and effectively with reactive repairs. You will prepare job specifications and select and manage contractors within budget.

You are educated to degree level or equivalent experience, with at least 3 years post qualification experience in residential maintenance and surveying, ideally within the context of social housing. RICS or CIOB qualification would be an advantage. A good communicator and collaborator, you can write and present complex technical reports and are a team player willing to support colleagues. Good ICT skills are essential. Based in London with extensive travel, a clean driving licence is an essential requirement.

We can offer you a flexible and friendly work environment: hybrid working from Church House, London and from home is a possibility.

If you are interested in working for us and can meet the above requirements, please contact us/see our website for an application form (noting that we do not accept CVs):

**Human Resources, the United Reformed Church, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT
020 7691 9871 recruitment@urc.org.uk www.urch.org.uk/jobs**

Closing date for applications: 12 noon, Friday 19 May 2023 Interview date: Friday 2 June 2023

This post requires an enhanced certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Moderator – South Western Synod
Full-time, seven-year termed appointment
Minister's Stipend



General Assembly wishes to appoint a United Reformed Church minister to serve as South Western Synod Moderator from 1 October 2023 (or an alternative by agreement).

South Western Synod is seeking a prayerful, discerning and inspirational Moderator to guide the Synod as looks to fulfil God's mission. The Moderator will help us build on strengths and develop our response to the challenges which are faced both by churches and those who live in our cities, towns and villages.

You will bring to the role your enthusiasm for mission and outreach, desire to promote inclusion and social justice, and advocacy for environmental sustainability. You will have practical experience and an understanding of leading effective change in complex situations. You will have a vibrant interest in ecumenical and interfaith relationships.

Your interpersonal, management, communication and digital skills will help you to lead a Synod which covers a region of varied communities from rural and seaside villages to towns and cities, with many churches in ecumenical partnerships and some in united areas. The Synod is committed to encouraging and supporting its 110 churches in mission to their local communities and beyond.

You will bring experience in innovative, mission focused ministry in local churches, to support and encourage our churches to be authentic, outward looking, and rooted in their local community. Your consultative and collaborative style of leadership, and ability to relate well to people, will enable you to provide inspirational and pastoral leadership to the Synod staff team, ministers and churches in the South West.

If you wish to nominate a minister for this role, please write to: Deepti Upadhyaya at recruitment@urc.org.uk by Sunday 23 April 2023.

If you wish to apply for this post, please read the role description and complete the role application form. Details can be found here: [Moderator – South Western Synod – United Reformed Church](#)

Deadline for applications: 12 noon, Monday 22 May 2023

Interview date: Monday 26 June 2023

In accordance with the Equalities Act 2010 Part 1; Schedule 9, there is a genuine occupational requirement for the post holder to be a Minister of Word and Sacraments of the United Reformed Church. This post requires an enhanced certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Find Us Online



The [East Midlands Synod website](https://www.urb5.org.uk/) is the one-stop shop for all essential information:
<https://www.urb5.org.uk/>



Our [East Midlands Synod Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/URC-East-Midlands-Synod-102279281444717/) hosts **Evening Prayers** every day at 9.30pm, led by our Moderator the **Revd Geoffrey Clarke** and our prayer team, along with other posts. If you are a Facebook user, please consider **Liking** and **Sharing** this Page and its posts:
<https://www.facebook.com/URC-East-Midlands-Synod-102279281444717/>

Similarly the [Synod Youth and Children's Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/URCEastmidlandsYouth/) shares news and ideas related to our work with young people: <https://www.facebook.com/URCEastmidlandsYouth/>



On our dedicated [YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzXFUrkN8XOGeZU5SgN95g), the Synod shares special events, training videos, worship resources and more. **Evening Prayers** are also uploaded here. Please subscribe:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzXFUrkN8XOGeZU5SgN95g>

Contacting East Midlands Synod

The **Synod Office** is open from **Monday to Thursday** each week. Please contact staff members by email in the first instance, as this will receive a direct response from the person with whom you wish to correspond. The Synod telephone line (**0115 960 9241**) is answered Monday-Thursday, 9.00am-3.00pm.

This E-letter is produced on behalf of:
The URC East Midlands Synod, 1 Edwards Lane, Sherwood, Nottingham, NG5 3AA.
Telephone: 0115 960 9241

CCL1067405

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Training event: photo by [Dylan Gillis](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Next edition: Thursday 18 May 2023

Please send all material for this E-Letter to both:
trainingpa@urb5.org.uk and training@urb5.org.uk
Copy deadline for next edition: 12 noon on **Monday 15 May 2023**