



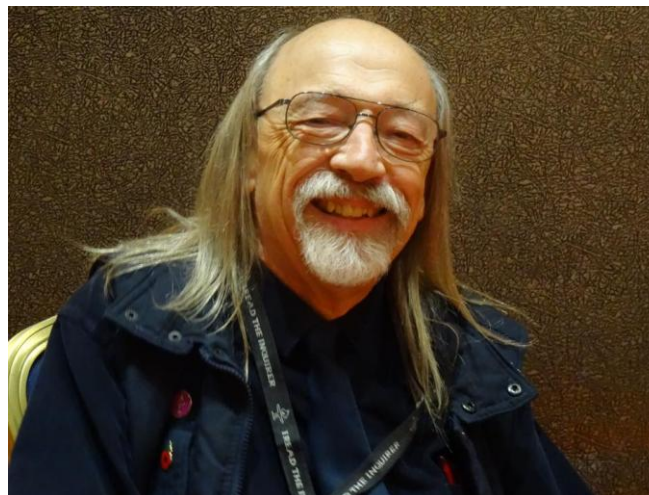
Cliff at the GA in Birmingham.

At this year's General Assembly meeting in Birmingham, Cliff Reed our Minster Emeritus, was twice the centre of attention. I had made sure that our President, Dot Hewerdine knew about his 70th birthday, so all 300 or so Unitarians sang Happy Birthday to him on the morning of the 12th of April. Earlier that morning, at breakfast, I had handed him the card from the congregation, which had come as a nice surprise.

An even bigger celebration took place on the last day of the GA when Cliff was made an Honorary Member, which is the highest honour the GA is able to bestow. John Midgley proposed Cliff and gave a long and wonderful speech, as you can see for yourselves (the speech is on page 4 in full). The speech was long because Cliff has done so many things for us Unitarians. I was very impressed and so was the whole audience, and to a long, truly thunderous and standing ovation, Cliff came forward to the rostrum to accept his honorary membership, very much like one does at the

Contents-

- 1 - Cliff at the GA
- 2 - Reminiscences of a Young Unitarian
- 3 - Reminiscences cont.; UFOS; Correction; Clarification; Jazz Concert
- 4 - Honorary Membership of the GA
- 5 - Hon. Membership cont.; Poem; Taizé; Framlingham Celebrations
- 6 - Events; Birthdays; Are Unitarians visible?; Petition update; Contacts; Thought for the Month



Cliff photographed at the Unitarian General Assembly meeting

BAFTA awards for lifetime achievements, the highest honour given there too.

There was Cliff, our Cliff, visibly moved by the applause. He made a short remark about having been a disreputable teenager and still being a disreputable septuagenarian, but when it came to a thank you speech, words failed him, or rather in one sentence he spoke the most profound and moving words. All he said was: *"Thank you, this movement has been my life."*

All I can say, I am sure on behalf of our whole congregation is, *"Thank you Cliff for your life's dedication."*

Riena Jackson

Reminiscences of a Young Unitarian on Holiday in the Derbyshire hills.

Great Hucklow! More than fifty years later simply hearing the name brings a flood of fond memories.

Oh the expectation! The excitement! Fourteen years old and in company of other aspiring young Unitarians, even the train journey was a thing of enormous thrill. We had heard so much about the children's holiday homes as they were then called, that we couldn't wait to get there. And having hardly ever breached the boundaries of Suffolk except perhaps for a school trip to London Zoo, we were all primed and ready for our first big adventure away from home.

June Teape, brave woman, wife of Nick our minister at Ipswich, and for some of us a teacher at our secondary modern school, marshalled us through train stations and herded us aboard trains as we made our journey north. We never called her June of course, Mrs Teape perhaps, or simply 'Miss' as we referred to her at school. June and Nick opened the doors of the 'church hall' each Friday evening and welcomed us to the youth club where we danced to the music of Acker Bilk, The Temperance Seven and the Chris Barber Jazz Band, all the big names of the time.

Of course we were all impressed by Nick Teape, turning up as he did in black leathers and riding his huge red motor bike even when arriving to conduct the Sunday service. Never before had we seen a minister of the cloth dressed in such a way. And the bike! 650cc the boys would say, nodding to each other knowingly.

But now it was June alone who kept us in order as the train progressed ever northwards. I for one was stunned by the swiftly changing landscape. There were hills! There were valleys! My eyes were used only to the flat fields of Suffolk and this hilly terrain was a revelation, even a shock!

Then suddenly we were on a coach heading for

Great Hucklow. Could our excitement be contained? Our first sight of the elegant, rambling, grey stone building where we were to stay sent our joy up another notch. To most of us, coming from a post-war council estate, it looked like a palace. We had been warned that the accommodation would be basic but to our eyes it appeared the height of genteel sophistication.

I shared a room with my best friend from school, Brenda, and we spent the first glorious minutes staring from the window at the undulating landscape and those amazing dry stone walls that stretched mile after glorious green mile, intercepted by the narrowest of country lanes. Then we were called to tea in the enormous dining room where we were to meet our fellow holiday-makers. Another revelation - the Northern accent! We'd heard it on Coronation Street, a brand new series watched avidly in black and white, but we'd never heard it spoken for real! Sprinkled with 'thees' and 'thous', it was strange to our ears and added to the list of new experiences that were coming thick and fast. Our own Suffolk dialect was the subject of much mirth and leg pulling, adding as we did an extra syllable to words where there was normally only one.

One of the things that really scared me though was to be told that all 'first timers' to Hucklow got a ritual dunking in the old stone horse trough. The trough was alarmingly close to the house and each time we passed at the start of one of our outings I nervously wondered if the threat would be put into action. Oh the humiliation to a fourteen year-old didn't bear contemplation. But of course it was yet another leg-pull to which I suspect we were rather prone.

We had been told to pack walking boots but as I didn't know what they were, I took my sturdy school shoes together with an assortment of sensible jumpers and jeans. Fourteen year-olds in those days were not quite the picture of glamour that they are today!

Reminiscences of a Young Unitarian on Holiday in the Derbyshire hills - continued

We were going to walk we were told. And walk we did. Literally it was uphill and down dale. Again the scenery took us by surprise. We were agog. There was Monsal Dale, where we skipped across stepping stones in the river bed, and the pretty village of Eyam where we gathered outside the only shop and sheltered beneath a shared raincoat eating ice-cream while the rain poured down around us.

Then there was the well-dressing. This was something we knew nothing about. The ancient wells, or spring heads, were honoured with a ritual dressing of thousands of flower petals forming pictures representing local scenes. It brought it home to us just how important a source of water had been before the days of simply turning on a tap. Our education continued. And of course there was Matlock Bath. Is it my imagination or did we really row a boat along the river there? But the highlight of the week for me had to be the village of Castleton and its Peak Cavern. The village was so pretty with a little brook tumbling through the centre but we Suffolk girls were utterly overwhelmed by the cavern. None of us had ever been inside a cave before – they are not often found in the flat Suffolk landscape, and were astonished to hear that earlier in the century not only did people live inside the cavern mouth but actually built houses there too. We were simply amazed by the sheer size of the place and the folklore that went with it.

Often we were collected at the end of our walk by a coach to take us back to base. Then the singing would begin. 'Ilkley Moor by Tat' was a favourite. To this day I still don't know what a 'Tat' is but nevertheless we joined in with gusto, or at least with the chorus.

And so it continued until the very last day and the week was over. The tears! The sobs! It was all over much too soon. But we had made new friendships and promised to write. And of course there was always next year!

By Sue Emmerson

UFOS – Unitarian Focus on Seeing

The April topic for our focus was 'Masonry Patterns' and below is Riena Jackson's contribution. For May the topic is 'Water' and for June is 'Waste'. We welcome all contributions.



Correction

Apologies to Miranda McIntosh, who celebrated her birthday last month and for whom I invented a new surname.

Clarification

Some people were confused about the use of our new logo at the top of the newsletter last month. Lewis certainly did not design the chalice symbol, which has been in use by Unitarians for many years. He did however design the whole logo, which includes the words and symbol – as at the top of this newsletter. We are using the same logo on all publicity to keep a recognisable identity.

Jazz Concert

Thank you to all who organised, contributed and donated at our Jazz Concert on 22nd April. We had a wide range of music – live and recorded – from Billie Holliday, Gershwin, and Hugh Laurie, to name just a few, as well as poems and readings. We raised £130 for our Renovation Fund.

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP OF THE GA - speech to propose Cliff for Honorary Membership by John Midgeley

Mme President, it gives me great pleasure to second this motion. When the question was put to our District Associations inviting them to support this proposal, the response was fully positive, one DA saying they thought he already was an Honorary Member!

The criteria for nomination for Honorary Membership are that they are persons who have rendered long and consistent service nationally, and who have thereby made a significant contribution towards the furtherance of the objectives of the General Assembly.

I am quite sure that Rev. Cliff Reed fulfils the criteria *and more*. His Unitarian life began as the son of a minister, Rev. Lionel Orlando Reed, who came over from another denomination to become a Unitarian when Cliff was 12 years old. Cliff attended Sunday School and soon grew into membership of the then Unitarian Young People's League. That young people's movement was very energetic, with busy, active branches, regional associations and national events at Great Hucklow and elsewhere; hardworking with work camps, singing and dancing a lot, sharing progressive worship services, challenging the denomination on social justice issues, falling in love a lot, falling out of love a lot, acting in plays, making films and records, making a nuisance of themselves at GA Annual Meetings, attending national and international youth rallies and events, sometimes seen as outrageous, with Cliff very much at the heart of it all, and all based on freedom and love. Wonderful! Those were the days! A good number of ministers as well as laypeople in significant leadership positions, emerged from the Unitarian Young People's League.

Deciding on a career in librarianship, but then having a change of heart, in 1969 Cliff flew to Guyana in South America with Voluntary Service Overseas, supposedly for two years; but after only a few weeks a road accident and resultant fractured skull landed him back in the UK.

1970-72 for two years, he worked at Dr. Williams's Library in London, living at the then Hibbert House

(until his stay there came to an interesting end). He was a member at that time of the notorious Golders Green Unitarians and was their delegate at the 1972 GA Meetings. Along the way, he became friendly with an Essex Hall staff-member called Paulette Walker.

He then made what seemed to us all the obvious move, in 1972, to Unitarian College and Manchester University, training for our ministry and studying theology. In December 1975, a rather unusual 'small ad' appeared in *The Inquirer*. "Cliff and Paulette finally announce... the purchase of the first ring." They were married at Golders Green in 1976 and Cliff moved to what was to be his only ministry, at Ipswich with Bedfield and Framlingham (1976—2012). It was long and consistent. On his retirement, the Ipswich congregation conferred on him the honorary title of Minister Emeritus. In addition, he made positive and consistent contributions to his District Association, serving twice as its Chair of the Executive Committee. Along the way his two sons were born, Edmund and Stephen.

He has also made significant contributions to the work of the General Assembly at the national level. He was a member of the Objects Review Commission which produced the first draft of the revised Objects of the General Assembly, even writing a hymn, widely used, based on our objects. Cliff didn't just *further* the objectives of the General Assembly, he helped to draft them! He wrote the booklet, *Unitarian—What's That?* - which has been sold and distributed and used in *very large numbers*. *Nobody knows* how many thousands of copies have been sold and distributed - over a lengthy period.

He's done a stint as a member of the Interview Panel and is currently a Dr. Williams' Trustee and a Trustee of the Thornton Fund.

He preached the Anniversary Sermon in 1995 and served as GA President for the year 1997-98.

A further contribution has been representing British Unitarians in the international dimension.

Cliff was one of the founding group of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists, and served as its secretary 1995-1997. He has played a significant part in its life

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP OF THE GA - cont
and work, especially in its publications. His ICUU duties took him to India (the Khasi Hills), Canada, the USA, Germany, Hungary, Transylvania, Switzerland, the Czech Republic and Spain, and he had the pleasure and the privilege of meeting Unitarians and Unitarian Universalists from many more countries besides.

In 1991 Cliff undertook an exchange ministry at the congregation of (the wonderfully named!) Bloomington Normal in Illinois in the USA. An enriching experience for all concerned (*what a pity we don't have exchange ministries any more*). Arising out of this came what perhaps has been the most outstanding contribution to our movement. It was the production in 1992, of Cliff's first book of worship material. Holding the view that worship is the heart of what we are and what we do as Unitarians, and that we should strive to make our worship services the best that our hearts and minds can produce, he has published a steady outpouring of prayers, poems, meditations and reflections *of the highest quality*, widely used, by ministers, lay worship leaders and many more, here and in many parts of the world. Also, there are hymns by Cliff to be found in all the hymnals published in Britain during his time in the ministry.

In addition, there have been significant writings on Michael Servetus, Charles Darwin, Charles Dickens and Beatrix Potter. There have been articles in all the Unitarian journals and magazines, and when Cliff writes to the *Inquirer* – *everybody* reads what he has to say!

There is much more that could be said. This is not a *significant* contribution, nor a *considerable* contribution, this is an **outstanding** contribution, *ample* – *more* than ample to justify bestowing upon him the denomination's highest honour.

I trust you will all support and vote in favour of this motion which I hereby second.

Cliff's reply - "*...from a disreputable teenager to a disreputable septuagenarian, Unitarianism has been my life, so thank you*".

Poetic reply to the Humanist R Layton's description of Unitarians in his poem "Pyrrhonic Laity"

*They are not like the townees here
who dress in wondrous raiment blue,
And worship loudly at the ball.*

*Their secret, adjectively revealed,
Much to discuss strange things—but small,
They worship Goddess Pyrrha,
Ancient Mother of us all.*

By June Teape

THE TAIZÉ GROUP - Reminder

Tuesday May 16th will see the first meeting of the Taizé singing group in the Meeting House, which will be led by Liz Gerrie and Jan Savage. You don't need to be a brilliant songster to come along – just to enjoy singing these meditative type chants (no solos required!)

Why not join us at 10.00 on the 16th and give it a try? From the point of view of seating, it would be helpful if you can let Ann Baepler know if you plan to be there.

If you're not familiar with Taizé singing, have a look online – all welcome.

Framlingham Unitarians Tercentenary Celebrations

The Framlingham congregation takes pleasure in inviting you to our celebrations on 13th and 14th May.

"Please come and support the event '**1717 and All That'** at 7pm on the evening of **Saturday 13 May** and come also to the events on **Sunday 14 May** beginning with **Tea at 2.15 p.m.**, followed at **3pm** by a concert of baroque music provided by **Zephyr Baroque**, concluding with our **Anniversary Service at 4pm** led by our friend, former GA President **Marion Baker**.

Please let Rev. Matthew Smith know you are coming so that he can organise the refreshments for everyone – revmatt1774@outlook.com or telephone 01728 621409

Events

30th April – Anniversary service and Lunch – all welcome

6th May – Dawn Chorus – bird walk in Christchurch Park 4.30m to 6.30am – book on 01473 433980

11th May – Trustees meeting

12th May – Talk at Quaker MH – ‘The Journey of a Lifer’ with Stan, a prisoner from Hollesley Bay – 7pm.

13th/14th May – Framlingham Tercentenary celebrations.

16th May – first Taizé Singing group meeting – 10am to 12 noon.

26th May – Film night at Quaker MH – ‘To Kill a Mockingbird’ – 7pm.

31st May and 1st June – Suffolk Show

2nd to 5th June – European Unitarians Together – Ulm, Germany - [Conference registration](#)

Birthdays –

Happy birthday in May to

3rd - Lewis Connolly; 16th - Simon King;

28th - Gerrie Hudson; 31st - Paula Chapman.

Sad news

We have learned recently of the death of Pearl Marbaniang. Pearl was Minister in Shillong and helped us link to the school there for which we raised money for over five years.



You may have seen the bluebells and grape hyacinth flowers coming up round the railings of our Meeting House. Hopefully they will make over the years and produce a carpet as in this photo taken by Rosemary Hamilton.

Are Unitarians visible?

For some reason I and other delegates were not sent all the documentation about the GA before it started, including information about how to get to the hotel. This did not bother me at all because I had been to the same hotel once before, and I knew exactly where it was. I would leave Birmingham International station and the hotel would be on the right, almost next door. However when I stepped out of the station and looked around, it was not there! Where was I supposed to go? What was the hotel called again? While I was thinking about what to do, I noticed a lady, more or less my age, grey hair, sensibly dressed, talking to a taxi driver. I rushed over to her and said, “Excuse me, you look to me like a Unitarian. Are you by any chance going to the GA?” Fortunately she was. She burst out laughing and let me share her taxi to the hotel. We often talk about the visibility of Unitarians in the community. I proved that we are visible. I am not so sure, though, if it is for the right reason!

Petition update

Thank you to all those people who signed the petition about parking spaces for people with a disability . In less than one month we raised 2,089 signatures (total on 28th April as I prepare this newsletter), which would mean we would certainly reach our target by the end of September. Sadly because of the election, all petitions will be suspended on 3rd May. So after the election we will have to start again. Watch this space – we hope to still achieve awareness of the problem and even making 2,089 people think about it and commit their support is a success.

Contacts – Contributions for the newsletter to Tessa please before the deadline of Thursday 25th May – ipswichunitarian@gmail.com
Riena Jackson (secretary) – 01473 210064 or mjack@aol.com
Lewis Connolly (Minister) – 01473 422528 or revdlewisconnolly@gmail.com

Thought for the month

If you are more fortunate than others it is better to build a longer table than a taller fence.
Anon