



Spring is Coming!

What a difference a week makes! On the right you can see the Meeting House covered with snow with a cheerful snowman in front waving to all the passers-by. He was made (according to Paulette Reed) by the children who live in the houses behind the church and must have cheered people up on their way to work. Above is a reminder of Spring and our Easter services this coming Good Friday and on Easter Day, 1st April. The photo was taken by Maggie Hodges last year. The daffodils and flowering bulbs are now peeking through around the Meeting House too.

Contents-

- 1 – Spring is coming; Keeping your contact details safe
- 2 – In Memoriam – Rev. Phillip Hewett
- 3 – In Memoriam cont.; What happens after we die?; East Anglian Unitarian Women's Group workshop
- 4 – Services; Events; Congratulations to Paula Chapman; Restoration Collection boxes
- 5 – Let Care be our Prayer; Birthdays; Earn a bit, Give a bit; Contacts; Thought for the month



Keeping your contact details safe

New regulations come into force on 25th May this year. The General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR for short – replaces national legislation in EU countries and means that anybody holding data on individuals has to be more open about what they hold and why. The rules apply to all organisations, including our Meeting House. Our secretary Riena Jackson will be writing to all members of our congregation to request written permission for us as an organisation to hold contact information about you – e.g. your name, postal address and email.

We guarantee to hold this information securely and will not pass it on to any other person or organisation, using it solely to contact you about the business of our Meeting.

If you receive this newsletter by email and are not also on the contact list for the Meeting House, as editor, I will need your permission to hold your email address to be able to stay in touch and to send this publication each month.

In Memoriam: The Rev. Phillip Hewett

“The local congregation has been the most significant unit in Unitarian life throughout the movement’s history. Being a thinking and concerned individual in isolation does not make a person fully Unitarian, nor does a sense of identification with Unitarianism as a broad historical movement. The vitality of Unitarianism is put to the test at the local level where individuals meet together on a person-to-person basis.”
- Phillip Hewett, ‘On Being a Unitarian’ (1968)

Austin Phillip Barton Hewett died on 24th February at the age of 93. He was born and raised in Dorchester and, as a boy, sang in his local parish church choir. He served in the R.A.F. during the Second World War. Phillip studied at Exeter and Manchester Colleges, Oxford, and at Harvard Divinity School. He entered the Unitarian ministry in 1953, serving for a year as assistant minister in Montreal. In 1954 he returned to England to become minister at the Ipswich Unitarian Meeting House – of which, more later.

In 1956 he received a call from the Unitarian church in Vancouver, where he ministered until 1991, afterwards becoming their minister emeritus. He was not quite retired though, conducting five short-term and interim ministries after that. Phillip returned regularly on visits to this country, particularly enjoying ministerial and Manchester College Old Students gatherings. He came back to Ipswich on a number of occasions, usually preaching in his old pulpit when he did so. Besides his work as a ‘parish’ minister, Phillip was a distinguished scholar and keen historian of our religious tradition. His writings include a history of our Meeting House.

Phillip wrote a number of important books on Unitarian thought and history, some of which I



will list below. They occupy an honoured place on my bookshelves. Widely respected by Unitarians and Unitarian Universalists in this country, in his adopted Canada, and in the United States, he will be fondly remembered for his distinguished presence, his kindness and his gentle, softly-spoken words of wisdom. I expect fuller obituaries will appear elsewhere, but I doubt if any of them will have much to say about Phillip’s two-year ministry in Ipswich. Although relatively brief, it was an important time here, initiating our Meeting’s long recovery from its low point in the post-war period, when closure was a very real possibility.

Phillip married Margaret Smith before coming to Ipswich. With Margaret (who predeceased him), Phillip had two sons. Phillip and Margaret came to an Ipswich congregation that was few in number and low in morale. The Meeting House itself was in a poor state and barely useable. It should be noted, incidentally, that Margaret was a strong Unitarian in her own right. She had been a leading figure in the Unitarian Young People’s League (UYPL), serving as its dynamic National President in 1949/50. It is to this connection that we probably owe one insight into the Hewetts’ time in Ipswich. It was recorded in UYPL’s newsletter, ‘The Young Unitarian’.

There we read that, one weekend in April 1955, “a motley crew of London U.Y.P.Lers” visited Ipswich “to clean up the Meeting House...The floor was swept and pews and gallery washed. An efficient method of throwing wet rags eliminated water problems for the gallery men but caused acute anxiety and much discomfort.” The UYPLers stayed overnight and it is recorded that they attended worship on the Sunday

In Memoriam: The Rev. Phillip Hewett – cont.

morning, when Phillip Hewett led a “moving” youth service. They were still there for the regular Sunday evening vesper service, about which *‘The Young Unitarian’* said the following: “*this short service is followed by a discussion on topical matters. It attracts a lot of attention, even in the local press. The minister often has people of all creeds ranged against him.*”

And Phillip wasn’t afraid to court controversy outside the Meeting House too. This was also reported in the local press. In particular he took a public stand against racism, leading a campaign against the so-called ‘colour-bar’ operated by a notorious local café. Social justice, along with the environment, peace and disarmament, were prominent among Phillip’s lifelong concerns. Many Unitarians in many churches in at least five countries will be honouring the memory of Phillip Hewett’s long years of service to our Movement. Here in Ipswich we have our own particular reasons for doing so.

Books by Phillip Hewett:

‘An Unfettered Faith: The Religion of a Unitarian’ (Lindsey Press, 1955)

‘The Uncarven Image’ (Beacon Press, 1962; Lindsey Press, 1970)

‘On Being a Unitarian’ (Lindsey Press, 1968, 1971)

‘Unitarians in Canada’ (Canadian Unitarian Council, 1978, 1995)

‘The Unitarian Way’ (Canadian Unitarian Council, 1985)

‘Racovia: An Early Liberal Religious Community’ (Blackstone Editions, 2004)

Cliff Reed

What happens after we die?

This conversation on 13th March was the most recent in a series of weekday evening discussions organised by Lewis Connolly. Seven members of the congregation came together to share their feelings and views on what happens after we die.

Since death can be a subject many of us tend to avoid, it was liberating to be able to be able to talk openly in a space made to feel safe. Lewis did this by offering clear guidelines on confidentiality and having respect for what each person might say – the evening proved an enriching and valuable experience.

Ann Baeppler

East Anglian Unitarian Women’s Group – Workshop on Nurturing Volunteers - Saturday 10th March 2018

There was a good turn-out for this workshop on an important topic, with people from all congregations in East Anglia attending. Thanks go to the Bury St Edmunds Meeting House for being our hosts. It was a co-operative effort with contributions from many members of the Women’s Group to help with organising, serving refreshments, introducing the topics, presenting sessions and the prayers to close the session.

The morning session was led by Judith Farmer and Lynne Davis from the Norwich Octagon congregation, who gave inspired presentations about the work they do with volunteers for the Forget-Me-Nots and in Norwich prison. They are both passionate about the positive effect of Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST) and have won a CILIP - libraries changing lives 2017 award with HMP Norwich library for their work in delivering CST intervention to support older prisoners suffering with dementia and memory problems. These are people who are often ‘forgotten’ in terms of effective care because of living within the prison system. We watched short films of both environments – Forget-Me-Not groups and within the prison. The examples of this work prompted members of other congregations to consider what they could do in their own community to offer similar support.

The afternoon session was led by Paulette Reed, Riena Jackson and Linda King from our own congregation who focussed on voluntary work within a congregation, particularly the teamwork needed when faced with essential building repairs. They gave an entertaining presentation of the thought processes of representative key individuals when the scale of the renovation work needed on the Ipswich Meeting House was realised. We heard from a Chairperson, Secretary and ‘Bum on Seat’ - and each character acted out their negative and positive thoughts and reactions. All of us watching realised the powerful influence this future work will have on the Ipswich congregation and we were prompted to discuss options and other support including for seeking funding. There is a delicate and vitally important balance to hold between maintaining the fabric of a historic building and still nurturing the people and community who use it.

This was a good opportunity to meet people from other congregations, to share ideas and for social exchange. Although we did not spend much time on the focus of nurturing volunteers as such, we did start to realise just how much work our volunteers do within our meeting places and within our communities.

Tessa Forsdike

Services in April

All services start at 10.45 and all are welcome –

Good Friday 30th March – communion

Sunday 1st April – Easter service – bring your Easter bonnet!

Sundays 8th and 15th – led by Lewis Connolly

Sunday 22nd led by Emily Ford, who is an Interfaith Minister and member of the Bury St Edmunds congregation. The title of her service is 'Rising with the Spring. Hope in Rwanda.'

Sunday 29th – Anniversary service and shared lunch – led by Lewis Connolly

Events in April

4th to 7th – General Assembly Meeting

Saturday 7th - Fabric Sale in aid of the St Elizabeth Hospice – Saturday 7th April 11 to 4 at Ipswich Indoor Bowling Club IP4 4JU

Tuesday 10th – Taizé Singing Group meeting

Tuesday 10th - Oryx and Crake organised by the Humanists - Liz and Peter Thompson will explore the many issues, both ethical and practical, raised in Margaret Atwood's trilogy of novels, "The Year of the Flood", "Oryx and Crake" and "Maddaddam". These novels portray a post-apocalyptic America, containing the results of generations of genetically manipulated humans and animals.

7:30 pm at the Co-Op Meeting Rooms, 47 St Helen's Street, Ipswich, IP4 2JL
Sunday 22nd – Earth Day - End Plastic Pollution Countdown to April 22 From poisoning and injuring marine life to disrupting human hormones, from littering our beaches and landscapes to clogging our waste streams and landfills, the exponential growth of plastics is now threatening the survival of our planet. In response, Earth Day 2018 is dedicated to providing the information and inspiration needed to fundamentally change human attitude and behaviour about plastics

Tuesday 24th – 2.30pm Trustees Meeting

Tuesday 24th – 7pm – 4C's Meeting at Beryl's home.

Advance notice –

Saturday 16th June – Book reading with Wendy Mitchell – 'Someone I used to know'. Octagon Chapel, Norwich
19th to 21st October – Unitarian Women's Group Conference at the Nightingale Centre, Hucklow.



Congratulations to Paula Chapman

Paula raised £1,600.40p in aid of the St Elizabeth Hospice with a sponsored head shave. Well done Paula – a great amount, a great charity to support and a courageous act!

Restoration Collection Boxes

Alongside Ann, Robert, Morag, Karen and Paulette, a king was in the counting house counting out the money. No time for bread & honey or even a cup of coffee as hundreds of coins were captured in our hands and transferred to plastic (sorry) bank bags. It required two of us to carry the 35 bags of coins, containing £302.87 to the bank! The bank clerk's congratulations that all was correct must go along with a big thank you to Paulette for insisting we recheck all the bags before banking – 6 contained the incorrect amount! Some money from the boxes had been handed in by individuals during the year so the final total amounts to £404.99.

Thank you to all who kept a box at home and to all who will be continuing or starting to fill a box this coming year. Karen has made a few new boxes so if you haven't got one, there's one waiting for you on the piano!

Our next mass box count will be in March 2019.

Linda King



These decorated money boxes are available for you to collect towards our restoration fund.

LET CARE BE OUR PRAYER, O GOD

Many of us, O God, don't believe in prayer. We're more comfortable with meditation, particularly the silent part. And some of us aren't sure we believe in God, or we scarcely know what the word means. But we do know that we care, that we care about one another and the kind of world we live in. We care, dear God, we care, and sometimes the care we feel scares us, because we're afraid to care too much... too much for those we love... too much for friends and companions along the way... too much for all the poverty, pain and injustice in the world... too much for those who suffer needlessly and without cause... too much for the waving grain and falling leaves, the passing of transient beauty before our eyes... too much for the depth of anguish and grief we might feel if we allowed ourselves to care too much for what can so easily be lost.

If we could pray out of the deep well of our capacity to care we might say, O God, let this care we feel become the bond of love that unites and heals us within and without, that joins us in body and spirit with the hopes and aspirations of people everywhere. Let our loving concern for those in our midst be the spark that enflames our loving concern for universal humanity. If we can't pray for lack of words, or for too little belief in the power of prayer, then, dear God, let our care be our prayer, and may we find the answer to all our prayers, spoken and unspoken, in the daily human expression of our loving concern.

Hear our prayer, O God, as we dare to care, now and here, and everywhere. Amen.

by Richard M Fewkes

This prayer was first published in the Aberdeen Unitarians' Newsletter. The national Unitarian newsletter editors have agreed to give permission for articles to be re-printed in other newsletters. So any contributor to the Ipswich Unitarian may find their article also re-published. If for any reason you prefer your article NOT to be included in other newsletters, please let the editor know when submitting any copy.

Birthdays in April –

Happy birthday to Miranda McIntosh on 3rd; Kate Gray on 5th; Morag Blue on 6th; Rev. Cliff Reed on 12th; David Forsdike on 19th; Sheila Seal on 21st; Rosemary Hamilton on 26th.

Earn a bit, give a bit

Did you know that you can donate to charity when selling items on eBay? You decide what percentage of your final selling price you'd like to give to charity and what percentage you'd like for yourself. eBay for Charity listings are the same as any other eBay listing but they have a blue and yellow Charity ribbon symbol in search results and your chosen charity's mission statement and logo in your listing. This means your listing can be seen by everyone who searches through eBay.co.uk. It will also get extra visibility through the eBay for charity pages. To find out more go to <https://www.ebay.com/help/policies/prohibited-restricted-items/charity-fundraising-policy?id=4286>

Disclaimer

We welcome contributions from all members and friends of our congregation. Views expressed in the articles are those of the individual and not necessarily those of our congregation or of our Unitarian community.

Contacts

Contributions for the next newsletter to Tessa please before the deadline of Wednesday 25th April 2018 – to ipswichunitarian@gmail.com or post to 48 Crabbe Street, Ipswich IP4 5HS
To contact our Secretary, Riena Jackson, ring 01473 210064/email mjack76748@aol.com
To contact our Minister, Lewis Connolly, ring 01473 422528/email revdlewisconnolly@gmail.com

Thought for the month

It is not bigotry to be certain we are right; but it is bigotry to be unable to imagine how we might possibly have got it wrong.
G K Chesterton

