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Almost there ...

The extensive restoration of our Meeting House with the extra adaptations for access and toilet provision have all taken longer than we hoped when we moved out of the building in February 2020 to allow Valiant’s workers to move in, but there have been lots of extra complications, not least the Covid pandemic. We are nearing the final hurdle and are hopeful of gaining full ‘possession’ again in April. The photo above, taken by Stuart Edgar (also in the photo) shows some progress.

Working Party



Thank you to all the stalwart supporters who have come to the Meeting House for three socially distanced and masked sessions of cleaning and sorting as we prepare for our re-opening. There is more to do and we will hold another working 'party' on Saturday 10th April from 10am to 12 noon. We welcome volunteers, but as we need to manage the spacing, please let Tessa Forsdike know you would like to help before just turning up. There is cleaning, vacuuming, sorting and re stocking to do.

Old Meeting House Photos

One bonus of sorting the hidden corners, the cupboards and the pews as we cleaned the Meeting House, was that we came across some treasures, including some old photos.



This photo shows Rev E. Lucking Tavener who was Minister from 1900 - 1908.

Marianne Prime

Marianne was born on the 2nd March 1895 in Haddiscoe, Norfolk to William and Clara Prime, the second of what would eventually be nine children. By 1901 the family had moved to Suffolk where William had obtained a job as a horseman at Kiln Farm, Playford, just outside Ipswich. On leaving school Marianne worked as a domestic servant to a local grocer & family on Tuddenham Road, Ipswich, later training as a tailoress at Phillip & Piper's factory in Ipswich.

Ellen Alice Marianne Prime's connection with the Ipswich Unitarian Meeting House stretched from the age of 25yrs in 1920 until her death in 1988 aged 93 yrs.

Marianne, an avid reader, lived simply with her books and radio, and being a 'country girl at heart' enjoyed nature and walking in the countryside, discussion and a natter! With the encouragement of Rev Cliff Reed, she recorded in writing, her memories of her time at the Meeting House.

The following is a transcription of her account.

Memories and Reflections.

E. M. Prime.

1920 - 1923.

When I joined the Unitarians in Friars Street, the Rev: Wilfred Harris, who was then the Minister, came from Adelaide, there was no Manse in those days, their furniture was brought into our old hall, and they lived there, until such time as the Rev: Harris bought a house in Jeffreys Road. I recall in those days – after our Sunday services – half of the congregation came out of the door on the right of the Meeting House, the other half came out of the door on the left, although member of this congregation belonged to the Men's and Womens Leagues, it would seem on a Sunday, they hadn't even a nodding acquaintance, they walked silently down the path into Friars Street, then each went their respective ways. Being a bookish person I was pleased to join their Literary and Social Guild, and spent many happy evenings with likeminded friends, sixteen in number. The Rev: Harris left us in 1923

Memories and Reflections cont.

and went to Dudley, after his death – judging from the appreciations written of him which appeared in the Inquirer, I realised he was one of the great intellects of his day.

1924 – 1929.

The Rev: Wallace McCubbin came in 1924, he had been a Congregational minister hitherto. This was his first Unitarian congregation, he stayed until 1929 when he retired he and Mrs Mrs McCubbin left Ipswich for St Albans leaving Marjorie their eldest daughter with us. During his ministry both the Mens and Womens Leagues flourished, and the Literary and Social Guild became more popular, especially the social side, Marjorie his daughter wrote plays as also did Fred Hamblin, whom she married later, these were performed in our old hall and always got a full house. During these years we had great fun on “All Hallows Eve”, these activities attracted young people, but when we were left without a Minister one by one they ceased to join us.

1930 – 1936.

Dr John Lewis came in 1930, he was a keen *[politician]* and worked hard for the Labour Party, with the result, many attended our services, also others joined us who had attended his lectures on Philosophy and Psychology give at the W.E.A. For a time we had very good congregations. In 1935 the Trustees decided they would like a change of Minister, Dr Lewis was asked to resign, this he refused to do, he called a meeting of the congregation to take a vote on the matter, his side won by one vote. He stayed with us another twelve months, then resigned, and took a post with *[Collonge/Gollancz?]* the publishers, half of the congregation left with him. Seventeen women walked out of the Womens League, this was conducted by Mrs Lesley Lewis – his wife.

1938 – 1940

The Rev^d Joseph Burton came in 1938. He and his wife Nancy lectured for the WEA. Once again our numbers increased at our Sunday evening services.

Joseph was a keen pacifist, when war broke out he felt he must speak against it, in public on our “Corn Hill”. By 1940 some of our veterans of the 1914-18 war felt enough was enough, he was asked to resign, advised by a friend to call a congregational meeting and take a vote on it. Mainly W.E.A. members came along to support him, but of course they had no voting power. Fred Hamblin stood at the door of the hall and refused to let them in, Joseph lost his temper and said “If they couldn’t come in he wouldn’t either”. It was a pity because the congregation would have outvoted the trustees in favour of him remaining with us, the result was, he lost his job and we lost a good minister and friend. After this a number of us left, resenting the intolerance of the Trustees, myself included, especially as one of our Unitarian principle is tolerance towards others.

1943 – 1946

Hence it was when the Rev^d Winifred Brown came in 1943, straight from Oxford. The congregation had dropped to a very small number – the men folk being away at the war and others on war work. During this period the “Adult School” joined in our services, although a small company a very friendly one, and Miss Brown was greatly liked, but I think she felt frustrated and resigned in 1946 to take up a post as teacher in a school at Loughborough, she remained there until her retirement. Although she never accepted another church, she supplied *[nearby]* ones when the occasion arose.

1948 – 1949

The Rev^d Harold Sore became minister at Bury St Edmunds, he supplied Ipswich for Sunday morning services for twelve months, he then left Bury for Oldham, as he left his aged mother at Bury St Edmunds we saw him occasionally when he was on holiday, visiting his mother.

To be continued next month ... transcribed as written.

Services in April

2nd - Good Friday - Rev Cliff Reed, Minister Emeritus

4th - Easter Sunday - Rev Cliff Reed

11th - Ali Mercer - Ipswich Unitarian living in Devon. Following this service there will be a discussion of the motions for the GA AGM.

18th - Andrew Benedict - East of England Faiths Agency

25th Anniversary Service - Congregational service

Thank you to all who lead our services and to Linda King who finds the volunteers.

321st Anniversary Service, 25th April.

Contributors or contributions more than welcome! As this will hopefully be the last Anniversary Service we hold on Zoom, the theme is a reflection on the positive aspects of the past year, the things which have helped us and maybe deepened our individual understanding of ourselves or what it has meant personally to be within any 'online' community & what we carry forward into 'life after lockdown'. Please contact Linda King if you are able to contribute.

General Assembly Website and Logo



There has been a lot of discussion about the new GA website <https://www.unitarian.org.uk/> and logo (above). If you have feedback, do send it to Chief Officer Liz Slade at Essex Hall – info@unitarian.org.uk

Motions for the General Assembly AGM.

A discussion will be held on the motions for the GA after the service on the 11th April. This is to enable our representative to know the wishes of the members of the Meeting House when it comes to voting at the Zoom GA Meetings to be held on the 24th April.

The motions and background papers have been circulated to all members and you are asked to read these before the 11th April to determine:

- Which 4 of the 6 motions do we want to be accepted for debate at the GA.
- On the 6 motions which way our representative is to vote.

Contributions to any discussion which ensues will be welcome from members & attenders; however, only members may vote.

Linda King.

Christian Conference Event



Ipswich Christian Leaders Conference
April 22nd 2021
on-line event starting 7:30 pm

For leaders of: Churches; Community Projects; Charities; Christian Business and Public Sector

Conference Speakers	Breakout Groups
Tom Hunt - MP for Ipswich Roger Sutton - Gather Networks Archdeacon Rhiannon King	Mental Health; Debt / Poverty; Education; Racial Equality; Addiction; Housing; Vulnerable Families; Business and more...

For information and registration:- <https://ipswich.in>

Ipswich?
"I'm in"

A conference for Christian leaders will be held locally on 22nd April online. We hope to be represented as a congregation (whether we label ourselves Christian or not) and the meeting is open to all, so feel free to join too (details above) – and please feed back to the Trustees any news or ways in which we can be helpfully involved.

Birthdays in April

Happy birthday to all the following who have birthdays in April –

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 .

Extra special good wishes to Sheila and Miranda who are celebrating special birthdays too.

Lighthouse Women's Aid

Lighthouse Women's Aid is the charity we have chosen to focus our support on during 2021 and once everything is up and running again, we will be organising some fundraising events for them. You may also like to support them by becoming an individual member. You can join for as little as £25 per year and that way you are helping traumatised women, young people and children to find a better future free from domestic abuse. Contact them for the form and bank details – 01473 220770 or admin@lighthousewa.org.uk

Lighthouse have recently appointed a Community Worker and we are exploring ways in which we can be involved with actively helping them, perhaps by supporting older survivors of domestic abuse. We will share more when we have more details.

Correction

In Daniele Falcinelli's article last month – 'Debating or Fighting', there was a small mistake on a date – the correct version is -

"The post was shared 15th March 2019 by Aaron Lee Lambert".

Book Group

We next meet on Thursday 8th April from 19.00 via Zoom to discuss Avni Doshi's book 'Burnt Sugar'. All are welcome – ask Tessa for the invite link.

Clean Air Ipswich

One of our supporters, Felicity, has had the brilliant idea of a few of you getting together and creating carefully stitched lungs (see photos below) with personalised messaging and send them to individuals who have the power to make changes.

Would you like to help Felicity with this as a crafter/organiser? Just let us know at Ipswich CAN (ipswichcan@gmail.com) and we'll connect you.

You might also consider signing the petition [Clean air for our kids: ban engine idling outside schools in Suffolk](#)



The Beach of Dreams

The [Beach of Dreams](#) is an epic journey to discover the hidden gems on the East Coast of England. Everyone is invited to choose a mile to walk and submit words and photos. These will contribute to a new digital story map of the coastal path reflecting and recording the narrative of the walk as it unfolds.

Beyond Darkness

Words for Reflection

Cliff Reed

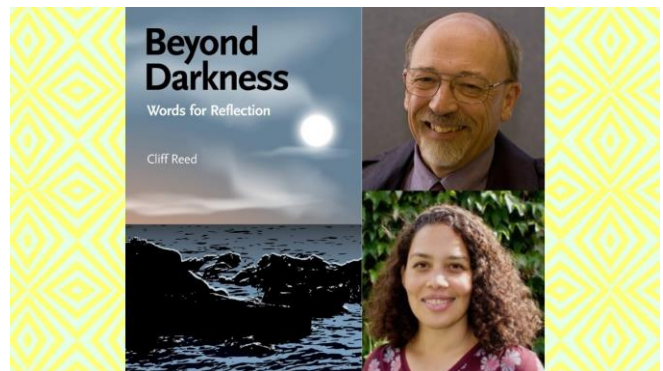


Beyond Darkness: Words for Reflection

A thematic collection of poems and prayers, written for private reflection and public gatherings, offering spiritual support and inspiration to anyone seeking a way through the uncertain times in which we are all living. Cliff Reed writes:

The years during which I wrote this book included some dark times, shadowed by terrorism, environmental abuses, and, most recently, the Covid-19 pandemic. The title is taken from my response to that threat, written at Eastertide in 2020. Such challenges to our faith and our optimism require a response that is neither trite nor despairing. With these and some other hard issues I have felt it necessary to engage.

Beyond Darkness: Words for Reflection - £9.00 plus £1.75 p&p
Published on 13 April 2021 by The Lindsey Press, London for the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches
*Available from 13 April 2021 from the **Unitarian Headquarters at Essex Hall tel. 020 7240 2384 (diverted during lockdown).** Pay with a debit/credit card.*
Also available from 13 April 2021 from major online booksellers.
ISBN: 978-0-85319-095-0



Beyond Darkness: Book Launch and Poetry Workshop

Tuesday 13 April 7.30–9pm, via Zoom
Join us for a celebration of the new Lindsey Press book '[Beyond Darkness](#)' by Rev Cliff Reed, Minister Emeritus at the [Ipswich Unitarian Meeting House](#) and author of many popular Unitarian devotional materials.

This event is hosted by Rev Kate Dean of Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel. It will include readings from the book and an interview with Cliff about his work, as well as an interactive poetry workshop – no experience necessary!

To book your place – follow this link -

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlpf-ygrzMrEtA2ofGmjhNSGhf4Ryt76HoS>

Poetry Group

On Thursday 29th April at 2pm, the poet discussed by the group will be Pádraig Ó Tuama. All welcome. Pádraig's book 'In the Shelter' was published last month in the US.

Robert retires

Our faithful organist Robert Waller has finally retired from his full-time work ... and taken on the responsibility as Treasurer of our Trustees, which will also keep him busy!



We wish you a very relaxing and healthy retirement Robert!

Graffiti – found by the craftspeople during the restoration -



(photo by Stuart Edgar)



This old photo of the Meeting House (found by Karen Tricker) shows the original golden colour of the doors which we have chosen to return to as the restoration project nears its end.

Jenny Pile

We are holding Jenny Pile in our thoughts and prayers as she recovers in hospital.

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 PLEASE for the next newsletter to Tessa before the deadline of Wednesday 28th April 2021 by email to ipswichunitarian@gmail.com or post to 48 Crabbe Street, Ipswich IP4 5HS

To contact our Secretary ring 01473 728498

email tessa@tessajordan.co.uk

Website – www.unitarianipswich.com

Thoughts for the month

Beware of Absolutes; they are never always right.

I was trying to daydream, but my mind kept wandering. - Steven Wright

The human brain starts working the moment you are born and never stops until you stand up to speak in public - Sir George Jessell