



Pride March in Ipswich



Our banner was a part of the Pride march along the Waterfront in Ipswich on Saturday 18th June – carried by a group of us keen to show our Meeting House support for diversity. It was a happy and friendly time – great to see all ages, all colours and all cultures represented.

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Not on Sundays ...

During the week a lot happens in and around our Meeting House – some is welcome, some interesting and some makes us angry ...



Scott comes regularly to take his Harris Hawk and two Saker Falcons up to the roof of the Willis building next door to frighten away the pigeons. Here he is pictured with the female falcon while the hawk was working on the roof. He parks in our forecourt, so if you see him, do ask to be introduced to the birds!

Not on Sundays cont.



Somebody 'kindly' donated this settee outside our gates and so we reported the fly tipping to the Council ... before they could collect and dispose of it, another settee appeared, presumably the donors of the second one took away the first one – perhaps they had moved to a smaller flat ...?



Thanks to the Council this one has also been collected ...

Sadly we also had a visit from vandals who threw bricks at and through our Meeting House windows, causing considerable damage which we will have to repair and claim against our insurance (plus pay the excess). Three separate windows have been affected and we hope that Terry Lankester, the craftsman who did such great work on the windows during the restoration, will be able to repair them.

Photo in the next column -



Lighthouse – Care Packs



In June we made another delivery of care packs to Lighthouse Women's Aid – so another 7 bags for women and 6 for children aged 6 to 10 are going to support women and families who may have been forced to leave their homes with nothing. We are still preparing more bags – Paula makes the beautiful draw string cloth bags and we fill them. If you have items to donate, please pass them to Tessa or leave them in the Meeting House.

Together for Ipswich

On the evening of the 27th June, as a representative of Ipswich Unitarian Meeting House, I attended the 'Together for Ipswich' meeting at the Salvation Army church on Woodbridge Road. Also in attendance were representatives of more than 60 other churches, faith groups and charities – more than 100 people in all. There were a variety of talks of varying lengths, though I took notes only on what I thought would be relevant to our congregation and ourselves as a Meeting House endeavouring to serve and support the Ipswich community. The aim of the meeting was what these organisations are doing (and can do, going forwards) about the "cost of living crisis" that is set to only worsen across the coming autumn and winter months, plunging many into poverty and potential crisis.

The first address was from a leading member of Ipswich Citizens' Advice. I already knew that they offer a popular drop-in service on Mondays to Fridays, which can involve providing financial advice, but also what should be classified as pastoral or emotional support. The speaker voiced her concern for what she called JAMs aka those who are "Just About Managing" – individuals and families who have never previously needed to seek benefits or visit a food bank. I feel it is really important that we are all mindful of the ease in which members of our community, including friends and acquaintances, can fall into this situation (through no fault of their own, if that needs to be said) but may feel ashamed or simply embarrassed to disclose the fact.

Next, a representative for Ipswich Borough Council provided sobering statistical information about the sharp increases in the numbers of people needing benefits, being in arrears, and/or in receipt of the Household Support Fund across the past two years. The cost of living crisis comes cruelly in the wake of Covid lockdowns and illnesses during which many, many people lost their livelihoods. There is still a taboo around using food banks and many people travel to locations outside their own postcode in order to avoid the risk of running into neighbours or friends.

A positive initiative mentioned by the Council representative is the Summer Holiday iCard, which entitles those aged 16 and under to many free healthy

events and activities across July/August in Ipswich. You can find out about this here: <https://www.ipswichfit.co.uk/summerholidayicard/>

Charitable and necessary things churches across Ipswich are already doing to help people during this crisis are:

- 1.) Running Top-up Shops, which are food banks with broader remits, often providing other tools, supplies and support in addition to food.
- 2.) Safe Harbour Church, which hosts a safe space with food and company every Tuesday at 1.00 pm at St Helen's Church.
- 3.) Family First mentoring charity for parents and carers.
- 4.) Financial and life skills courses, such as those run by Christians Against Poverty.
- 5.) Wellbeing cafes, which offer compassionate and support spaces for friendship and discussion, often around topics such as bereavement and loss. I've encountered these in the context of environmental activism before, such as providing a space for being to talk about their fears and grief surrounding climate change.

Overall it was an inspiring event, though it also acutely reminded me that charity often steps in when a government has failed, picking up the pieces. However, the fact that members of different denominations can come together in the spirit of charity and community is encouraging. I hope we can do more as a Meeting House to support those struggling in Ipswich across these coming months.

Adam Whybray

We are grateful to Adam for representing us at this meeting. If you feel moved to action, please speak to him – or to one of the Trustees.

Apology

Last month in the newsletter I cut ten years from our Queen's reign – I apologise unreservedly. Of course in June 2022 HM Queen Elizabeth II was celebrating her **Platinum** Jubilee.

A picnic over the border!

After the grandeur of the Octagon Chapel in the morning it was something of a contrast to find myself sitting with members of the same congregation in the middle of a burial ground 9 miles south of Norwich. I had been invited to the congregational picnic that takes place every year in the surrounds of the Hapton Chapel. The Chapel, now a private house abuts the burial ground which now cared for by Octagon Trustees, under the 'Hapton Burial Ground & Trust Property'.¹

Unfortunately I lost my way to the picnic and arrived 'late to the party' so am unable to report on all the individual contributions of poetry, readings etc: suffice to say, next time, I won't be late so the full pleasure of the afternoon can be absorbed! And a pleasure it was, relaxing with fellow Unitarians in a friendly atmosphere, beautiful weather, surrounded by trees and picnicking in a part wild meadow burial ground.

A real added bonus was being invited by the present owners of Hapton Chapel to go into their home & look around what had been the original Chapel. Whilst the property now has extensions, the basic chapel still remains .

The original gathering of dissenters goes back to 1729. Following a legacy from Elizabeth Graye of Hapton who set up a trust in her will to build a Meeting House and support a Minister, the Hapton Chapel was built by Presbyterians in 1741; she also endowed about 120 acres of land.²



Photo – Nicolas Groves



Photo – Bruce Chilton

The building is timber framed with rendered wattle & daub walls, it has a central doorway & round headed windows with leaded panes. The door is said to have come from the Octagon Chapel!³ The part of the house which was the chapel reminded me of the Meeting House at Framlingham; a high ceiling, two windows (now internal) either side of the present staircase on the wall where the original pulpit would have been. Pamment or maybe brick, flooring and imagination as to where the galleries would have been, completed the picture.

By 1928 the congregation had dwindled and the Trust's income was insufficient to maintain the building and minister. The land was sold and all responsibility for the chapel & services was transferred to the Octagon Trustees. In 1959 the Chapel closed and a year later the Charity Commissioners agreed it could be sold. The Chapel was derelict for several years before being converted into cottages and then into a private house. It was listed Grade 2 in 1981.⁴

All in all, a wonderful day.

Linda King

References:

1. Charity Commission for England & Wales
2. Norfolk Record Office on line catalogue
3. The Unitarian Heritage
4. Norfolk Unitarians

Ride and Stride

Each year Suffolk Historic Churches Trust organises a Ride and Stride event when churches in Suffolk open their doors – this year on Saturday 10th September - and invite walkers and cyclists to visit raising sponsorship funds which are then shared equally between the Trust and the church nominated by the walkers and riders.

We were grateful to the SHCT for donating two grants towards our restoration project, so it feels important to give back now (and half the funds raised will come back to us too). We are therefore appealing for people to choose to ride or to stride and seek sponsors. Some people may prefer to sponsor rather than to walk.

It is an opportunity to visit and have a look round some very beautiful and interesting church buildings.

The press launch for the Ride and Stride is happening on Tuesday 5th July at 10am at the Ipswich International Church at 1 Burlington Road Ipswich IP1 2EU- with rapper and music producer Curtis Blanc, who leads the music at the International Church.

Curtis is the founder of Tisrespect (<https://tisrespect.uk>), dedicated to building a platform for shaping the positive role models and entertainers of tomorrow.

Curtis Blanc is an award winning creative entrepreneur. Having overcome barriers to learning and social inclusion, he has a profound story to share of his successful career in volunteering and how this set the foundation for a journey of personal development and entrepreneurial success. He is extremely passionate about challenging creative disengagement, Curtis combines poetry, motivational speaking and music to present his unique experience to inspire the heart of communities.

As the Ipswich Area Organiser of the Ride and Stride, Tessa Forsdike will be at the launch on her bike! Do feel free to join us – on your bike too if you can.

We will be opening the Meeting House on 10th September both for the Ride and Stride and for the Heritage Open Days weekend. We are always keen to show off our beautiful building.

Links to check out-

Dan Cohen hosted a service at Mount Vernon Unitarian Church in the US that focused on the power of Forgiveness. His wife Suzanne provided two reading sections, one a poem from the UUA website and another a series of 10 quotations on forgiveness that they found online and concluded the reading with her own unique perspective on forgiveness. Dan's homily/sermon focused on a mistake he made during his training days and for which he was ultimately forgiven. The story is pretty compelling, a little challenging in some ways both for him to present and for others to listen to, and emotionally poignant. Presenting this was a sort of catharsis for him, and perhaps an act of forgiving. The service was enormously well received. Dan sent the link below so we could watch the service -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8C9HVku4Ok>

The next Heart and Soul online session will be on Tuesday 19th July at 7.30pm. Lizzie Kingston Harrison will be leading a service including reflection, music, sharing and prayer. If you would like to join in, contact Lizzie for the link -

e.s.kingston.harrison@gmail.com

European Days of Jewish Culture & Heritage

B'nai B'rith UK [Alliance member] has shared that the European Days of Jewish Culture and Heritage (EDJCH) will run from 1 September to 31 December this year. -<https://www.bnaibrithuk.org/european-days-of-culture-and-heritage-days/>

Heritage Open Days Directory Now Live

England's biggest festival of history and culture returns this September. Take an early peek at the programme as it develops, with more than 800 FREE events already planned this year, and more to come throughout June, July and August. See the programme here. <https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/visiting>

A Brief History of the English Mosque

In line with Eid al-Fitr, Historic England has published a blog into the architectural evolution of the mosque in Britain, from the conversion of houses to contemporary expressions of mosque architecture-

<https://heritagecalling.com/2022/05/02/a-brief-history-of-the-british-mosque/>

Book Group

The next meeting is on Wednesday 6th July at 7pm via Zoom. We will be discussing Lemn Sissay's book 'My Name is Why' and some of his poems. All welcome – contact Tessa for the link.

Poetry Group

The group next meets on 28th July at 2pm and will be discussing Ogden Nash's work.

Friends' Group Bric a Brac

The Friends of the Ipswich Unitarian Meeting House group organised a Bric a Brac/Jumble Sale for Saturday 25th June. The footfall around the Meeting House was not high that day, but the sale raised £35 for the Friends' Meeting House funds; £13 for Lighthouse (on the book stall); £10 for the Afghanistan Appeal (thanks to Linda) and 23 adults and one child visited the Meeting House none of whom had ever before seen its charms. So in many ways, though it could have been better, it was still a success.

Birthdays in July

Happy birthday to Angus Hamilton on 1st ; Cherrie Wilkinson on 2nd ; Pipiri Hudson on 6th ; Beatrix Stevens on 15th; Dan Cohen on 17th ; Harold Mangar on 27th ; Edmund reed on 28th .

Organ recital

Our organist Robert Waller recorded the recital he entertained us with on 20th May. If you would like to listen to that, please contact Robert - bob.waller2255@gmail.com or Paulette - etty.reed@gmail.com



Services in July

3rd July - Dr Nicholas Groves, the Octagon Norwich.
10th July - Andrew Benedict, East of England Faith Agency
17th July - Simon Ramacci. Christian CND
24 July. Rev Matthew Smith. Minister to Framlingham & Bury Unitarians.
31st July - tbc



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 27th July 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

Thought for the month

Your assumptions are your windows on the world. Scrub them off every once in a while, or the light won't come in.
Isaac Asimov.