



We are Open!

Each year we open our Meeting House to all visitors from the beginning of May to the end of September on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 12 noon to 16.00. We are proud of our history and of our beautiful building so are keen to show it off!

Opening so regularly (as well as of course for services and events) requires the dedication of many volunteers to open the doors, talk to visitors and answer questions (or to say they will find out the answers and come back to the enquirer!). Paulette has prepared a rota and we invite all those who are supportive of our building to sign up for at least one or two sessions.

On some days there are only a few visitors and as a volunteer you have the chance to meditate in the calm of the building – or to catch up on your reading. On other days many people visit, in groups or singly and some visitors have fascinating stories about their connection with the Meeting House – do take details for an article in this newsletter!

Contents

- 1 - We are Open; Easter Visitors
- 2 – Sad news; Pauline Barham; Sophie Pryor
- 3 – Services; Poetry Group; Book Group; Spiritual not Religious; Worship Studies course; Unitarians for Climate Justice; Cherishing the Earth
- 4 – Birthdays; Urges of Spring; Ride and Stride; Delegates Report (cont. on page 5)
- 6 – GA Reflections (cont. on page 7)
- 7 – Pride Exhibition; Fundraiser for Suffolk Sight; Thought for the Month; Contacts

Easter visitors



It is one of our traditions to invite people to wear an Easter bonnet at our Easter Sunday service and this year was no exception – here are some of those who joined us – as well as the dogs!

There was also sharing of chocolate – a good tradition too.

Thank you to John Stevens for leading the service.

Sad News

We are sad to announce the death of June Teape who was a long-standing member and supporter of the Meeting House. Her husband Nicholas Teape was our Minister from 1957 to 1974 and June supported him devotedly during that time. June's funeral will be held at the Meeting House on Wednesday 10th May at 11.30 and all are welcome to come and remember her.

We will publish a series of recollections of June in our next newsletter – please send your piece to Tessa along with any photos. June was a very special person, and we want to honour her memory.

Pauline Vera Barham (4th October 1934 to 21st March 2023) I attended her funeral service in the Old Cemetery Chapel on Monday, 24th April 2023. As a child Pauline, her parents, and siblings lived in one of the rows of houses in what was Unitarian Gardens. The families were moved out and rehoused, and the properties knocked down to make way for the new Willis Faber & Dumas. For many years Pauline, along with her good friend Marjorie Shattock, used to clean our Meeting House. Marjorie was a member of the congregation. Pauline's first marriage was a secret affair at the Register Office – only her grandmother knew about it beforehand! Her second marriage to Frank, who acted as Caretaker, was in the Meeting House. I remember Pauline as a warm, friendly, and happy person, who was very family orientated. She leaves behind a large family: children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, and lots of friends. Pauline is buried in the Old Cemetery with her beloved Frank.

It was interesting to me to note the number of times 'Unitarian' and 'Unitarian Meeting House' was mentioned.

Paulette Reed

The memorial service for Joyce Salmon is being held on Thursday 27th April, as this issue goes to print. Linda King's elderly aunt Daphne and her cousin have also recently died.

We send all the bereaved families our condolences.

Sophie Pryor - A Celebration of her Life

In the April issue of the Ipswich Unitarian you will have read of the death on 10th March of 92-year-old Sophie Pryor.

Isabelle, Sophie's eldest daughter, wrote the following about her mother: "Sophie passed away at Norwood Care Home where she had been living for two months. For much of her life in Ipswich (she moved to the town in the 1980's) she attended services in the Meeting House when she could. She loved the ancient building, the sun filtering through the windows and the simplicity of the architecture. But most of all she loved the openness of the Unitarian spirituality, of the ministers and the congregation. She travelled with Cliff Reed on interfaith visits and became close to several other members of the congregation, especially some who attended, like her, a Buddhist meditation group in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh. She felt very accepted at the Meeting House and found a nourishing spiritual refuge there."

A service for Sophie took place in the Meeting House on Tuesday 18th April where, in recognition of her joie de vivre and fun-loving personality, the emphasis was on celebration, and the atmosphere one of gratitude for a life well lived. By request of the family, the congregation wore colourful clothing and much of the music chosen was upbeat, including The Beatles singing Ob-la-di, Ob-la-da (Sophie was a life-long lover of The Beatles). But we also heard the Avalokitesvara mantra, a Buddhist chant of compassion. Our Minister Emeritus Cliff Reed offered a prayerful reflection, as well as his memories of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in which Sophie took part, which was just one of a series of heartfelt tributes.

It may sound strange to describe a memorial service as joyful and uplifting, but with all the love expressed for Sophie by her family and the many others who held her in such affection, no other words will do!

Ann Baeppler

Services in May

7th - Rev Cliff Reed Minister Emeritus

14th - Rev Oscar Sinclair, Unitarian Universalist Minister on a sabbatical from the US

21st Rev Celia or Rev John Midgley. Retired Unitarian Ministers (via ZOOM)

28th - Rev Cliff Reed. Minister Emeritus. Followed by Whit Sunday Communion.

Poetry Group

The poetry group will meet next on 25th May at 2pm and will look at the poetry of Maya Angelou.

Book Group

The group is reading 'A Month in the Country' by J.L. Carr – a slim volume which recounts the memories of a damaged survivor of the First World War. We meet to discuss the book on Thursday 4th May at 7pm – via Zoom.

Spiritual Not Religious Connections:

'Spiritual Not Religious' is an hour of discussion based on social issues at 7pm on the second or third Wednesday of each month. This is a joint project between **Unitarian Transformers** and the 13 National Unitarian Fellowships.

All are welcome, you do not have to be a Unitarian, you just have to have a free and open mind!

Join via Zoom – the link and passcode are:

<https://zoom.us/j/94223648779> Meeting ID: 942

2364 8779 Passcode: 3c9Pb1

Learn more here: www.unitariantransformers.org.uk

Worship Studies Course (online)

Worship Studies Course Foundation Step: a course in conducting high quality Unitarian Worship, this Autumn.

Are you interested in leading Unitarian services? Do you want to improve the quality of your worship leadership? Need help with leading online worship?

Unitarian College are offering an online course for all interested Unitarians in conducting high quality worship.

<https://www.unitarian.org.uk/event/worship-studies-course-autumn-2023-2/>

UNITARIANS FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

On Saturday 22 April, 'Unitarians for Climate Justice' took part in Extinction Rebellion's 'The Big One' peaceful protests in central London. 'Unitarians for Climate Justice' is a newly formed group for Unitarians concerned about climate change. Around 25 of them travelled to London to take part in today's protests alongside other faith groups, from Unitarian congregations across the UK including London, Brighton, Cardiff, Bristol, Hinckley, Horsham, Godalming & Framingham.

<https://www.unitarian.org.uk/2023/04/25/unitarians-for-climate-justice-join-extinction-rebellions-the-big-one/>



Cherishing the Earth – Nourishing the Spirit – NEW BOOK FROM THE Lindsey press

Commissioning Editor: Maria Curtis. This new book presents a range of Unitarian responses to the global environmental crisis. Contributors include ministers, lay people, and children, writing from diverse theological and ethical perspectives, exploring what it might mean to live in right relationship with the Earth. Their insights range from the prophetic and political to the practical and intensely personal, but all share a sense of gratitude for the sacred gift of life.

On sale for £12.00 from Unitarian Headquarters at Essex Hall in London, tel. 020 7240 2384. (plus p&p). Pay with a debit/credit card. Orders can also be placed online using the following link:

<https://www.unitarian.org.uk/shop>

Birthdays in May –

Happy birthday to Daniele Falcinelli on 2nd ; Sally Washington on 12th; Simon King on 16th; Gerrie Hudson on 28th and Paula Chapman on 31st .
We hope you have a great day and an equally good year.

Urges of Spring

Following the rediscovery of her poem published in 1987 and again in our last issue, Rosemary Hamilton has issued a revised version -

Urges of Spring (dis)continued

Ah, spring is here again.
The sun shines through the windowpane.
Alas! Alack! I feel no need
to dash about the house at speed.

Way long ago when I was young,
spring cleaning was a ritual to be done,
one was filled with a sense of pride
especially as a new young bride.

Now, time has taken its toll on me
I'm white of hair and 83.
I have arthritis in my knees
And in my chest a bit of a wheeze.

But come and visit and let us natter,
I'm a bit untidy, but does that matter?
And should the sun show up the dust,
Please write your name in it, that's a must.

...the spider no longer runs off in dread
but sleeps contented in her gossamer bed.

Ride and Stride

On Saturday 9th September, churches, chapels and meeting houses throughout Suffolk will open their doors for sponsored cyclists and walkers to visit. We too will be participating. If you fancy looking around local churches and raising funds for us too, see Adam or Tessa for details.

Delegate's Report April 2023

I had decided that this year I would make it my last attendance at our national annual general meetings. I've been going to these meetings on and off since the early 70s; first four years as 'headquarters staff' then as delegate for the Ipswich congregation with gaps here and there of non-attendance. So, imagine, then, my disappointment and sadness when no one came forward to be our delegate.

The pandemic has disrupted the familiar pattern of things which does not make it easy for many people, me included. Everything is now online, via an app or QR code. No annual report to read beforehand. No motions to be debated by congregations and give guidance to delegate(s) which way to vote.

Book Launch: "Cherishing the Earth – Nourishing the Spirit" edited by Maria Curtis. A range of Unitarian responses to the global ecological crisis. I purchased a copy for our library.

Morning worship: There was the option of morning worship with communion or through meditation.

The Nightingale Centre and Send-A-Child-to-Hucklow: (Providing holidays for disadvantaged children for more than sixty years). Colin Partington reported that financially, the centre is in a healthy position, and that activities throughout the year means that it is fully booked until October. A mini tornado hit the village and fallen trees caused damage to buildings including roof tiles damaged and missing from the main house. He also gave a touching tribute to his fellow trustee the Rev Ernest Baker who died in February.

John Relly Beard Lecture: Not so much lecture more in conversation – Jon Alexander gave an interesting talk on his take on citizenship. He has a background in advertising and works for the National Trust. It was in his work with the NT

Delegate's report 2023 – cont.

that he began to ask this question “*What would the world be like if we began to talk with people about being citizens rather than consumers?*” He gave three examples: Subject Stories, Consumer Stories, and Citizen Stories. Subject stories where society tells you what to do and that the ‘right’ thing is to ‘keep your head down and do as you’re told’. In Consumer stories (which is where we are now) we chase self-interest; the theory is that if we all do the same then, eventually, we will build a coherent society. Citizen stories is when individuals get involved and contribute self, ideas, and work together creatively to build the best society. Of course there’s a book ‘*From Consumer to Citizen*’. Exit through the gift shop.

Rob Whiteman (Treasurer): Rob reported that the finances has been shaped into sharper focus and that some progress had been made. The decision was made to move away from fossil fuels and towards more sustainable investments. The accounting software was not up to scratch so a new service had to be implemented. The accounts were not ready because the new auditors had dragged their feet and was asking for yet more money; this led to a move back to the previous auditors who did not have sufficient time to complete the work. We were assured that this would be done in time to comply with legal requirements. It would appear that we are living beyond our means, investments are down this year, and we have lost £357,387.00!

Anniversary service: Rev Winnie Gordon preached on the theme of justice. She urged us to show up and stand up for justice whenever and wherever because it doesn’t happen on its own. There was a standing ovation with whooping – more fitting for a music concert than an act of worship.

Zette: No Zette because, even with all the fancy technology available no one volunteered to be editor!! David Warhurst did put together a first edition together and a second one will be available, you’ve guessed it, on-line. Zette is (was) the vehicle which reported on and gave an overall flavour all the sectional meetings because it is

not possible to attend them all.

Emergency Motion: signed by thirteen ministers who are concerned about the provisions of the Illegal Immigration Bill will remove rights protection in the UK for vulnerable adults and children seeking safe haven. It further asks our Chief Officer to join with other church leaders in publicly opposing the Bill as it stands; and calls on Unitarian congregations and individuals to raise concerns with their MPs.

LGBT+Voices: a lively presentation and the project leaders (Lizzie Kingston Harrison and Rory Castle Jones) have been gathering, recording, and sharing stories from the struggle for LGBT+ equality – seeking to learn from the past and to celebrate the movement’s significant contribution to inclusion in the denomination and beyond. They would like more (newspaper cuttings, badges, personal stories) anything to build up an archive and to trace our involvement in fighting for equal rights and justice.

Ethnic Minorities Heritage Spiritual Space: This was an interesting session aimed at those who self-identify as from an ethnic minority background as defined under the British/UK protected status. The group is in its infancy, this being it’s second meeting.

Administrative Motions dealt with the out-going President (Rev Sue Woolley), installed Vince McCully as President for 2023-2024 and we accepted the appointment of Professor Geoff Livermore as Vice-President for the same period.

Overview: We face the dilemma of the necessity to adapt and change with the current culture, but not having the membership numbers to accommodate and lead this change in all our congregations. Fewer people doing more. With over 300 participants including overseas guests, annual meetings are a good place to meet with friends; and also meet and greet new people. There were many names of people I know on the list, but I did not actually get within ten metres of many so I had to content myself with a wave across a crowded room.

Paulette Reed

GA reflections 2023

The 'GA', or the Annual Meetings of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, to give the event its full name was held at a hotel near Daventry from 4th to 6th April. It was the usual mix of business, worship, talks and meetings on a range of issues. Overall, it was an enjoyable and positive few days. There were a couple of disappointments, though, which rather surprised me. Firstly, there was the dearth of interesting and controversial motions such as usually enliven the plenary sessions. Finally, though, one did appear as an emergency motion expressing concern "that the provisions of the Illegal Immigration Bill will remove rights to protection in the UK for vulnerable adults and children seeking safe haven." Congregations and individuals are called on "to raise these concerns with their MPs" before the Bill's third reading on 25th April. The motion was passed unanimously, apart from, I think, one abstention. The second disappointment was about the near absence of one of the GA Meetings' regular features: 'GA Zette'.

This year there was only one issue of 'GA Zette', the 'daily newspaper' of the Meetings since 1963, instead of the four issues that might have been expected and the one that did come out was not the usual assortment of reports on each day's events which, apart from anything else, is very useful for anyone doing a report-back service like this one! The problem was that, for the first time ever, no one could be found to edit it! This is the subject of an article in the one issue that did appear, but I haven't time to go into all this now. It is ironic, though, that this has happened in 2023, when modern technology makes it so much easier to produce a daily 'GA Zette' than was the case back in the '60s, in the days of all-night sessions on typewriters and duplicators that I remember.

Back then 'GA Zette' was largely the work of young people, mostly drawn from the Foy Society and the Unitarian Young People's League, or UYPL. It was as a UYPLer that I attended my first full GA Meetings in 1968. I was involved in UYPL from 1962 until the mid-1970s, and this has always given me an

interest in Unitarian youth activity. Sadly, and to the great loss of the Unitarian movement, the once vibrant and independent youth movement that UYPL had been, closed down in 1984. This didn't mean the end of Unitarian youth activity, of course, but nothing comparable has really replaced UYPL. It was encouraging, therefore, that this year's GA featured a youth group, called #Blessed from Gellionnen Chapel near Swansea.

They were at the meeting which launched the new Lindsey Press book, 'Cherishing the Earth – Nourishing the Spirit', edited by the Rev. Maria Curtis. In the book a number of contributors – all Unitarians and some of whom spoke at the meeting - "write from diverse theological and ethical perspectives" on living "in right relationship with the Earth." One chapter is by the Gellionnen Chapel youth group. and describes their varied activities, including their work clearing the rubbish that is routinely dumped and fly-tipped on the otherwise beautiful 'mountain', as they call it, where their delightful little Chapel is situated. Of this environmental effort they write, "Our first excursion included the removal of 18 tyres; the second generated 20 bin bags full of rubbish; and our latest attempt involved the removal of 123 tyres, two TV sets, and a kitchen sink." The Gellionnen youth group also held their own meeting at the GA, called 'Youth Leading Change', when they said more about themselves, their faith and their activities – which include more than just clearing rubbish. I went to this meeting and it seemed to me that the old spirit of UYPL is still alive in young Unitarians like this. Writing of their faith they write, "As Unitarians, we are a community of people who take a liberal approach to our religion and spirituality. We encourage the freedom to believe in what your life-experience tells you is true and what your conscience tells you is right." The teenagers and twenty-somethings in #Blessed were an encouraging presence at the GA.

GA Reflections 2023 cont.

Another meeting which I attended was 'LGBT+ Voices'. This is the title of what is called, "a new project that lifts up the voices of LGBT+ Unitarians." One of the two project leaders is Lizzie Kingston Harrison from Framlingham. Amongst other things, the meeting traced the long history of Unitarian work to change the old negative attitudes on LGBT+ issues. These efforts got going in around 1970 and included debates and resolutions at GA Meetings which I well remember. Other personal memories stirred by the meeting concerned the 'gay-straight integration' work of Integroup, of which I was a member at Golders Green Unitarian Church in the early '70s, and a very successful UYPL conference at Great Hucklow in 1972 on attitudes to homosexuality. All this is the subject of a fascinating new exhibition which will be coming here to the Meeting House on this summer's Pride weekend, so be sure to come and see it!

Cliff Reed



<https://www.unitarian.org.uk/lgbt-unitarian-voices-timeline/>

This is the link to the online exhibition and ours is the first photo people see (as above)!

We will be hosting the exhibition in the Meeting House over the weekend of Ipswich Pride celebrations – 15th and 16th July.

Thought for the month

Not everything that is old is good, just as not everything that is new is false - George Enyedi

Fundraiser for Suffolk Sight

On Thursday 1st June from 18:30 to 20:30 there will be a talk at the Meeting House entitled 'Exploring Resources for the Visually Impaired: Dialogue and Discussion of *Librivox* and *Sound On*' from Tim and Rachel Pennick and Adam Whybray. The first half of the talk will be from Tim and Rachel from *Sound On* about how their volunteers record and distribute audio recordings of the local news for those who are blind and visually impaired in the local community. The second half will be from Adam about Librivox.org, which aims to make the public domain archive of literary and historical texts available in audio form for those otherwise unable to access the materials on archive.org and *Project Gutenberg*. Adam had recorded several short stories over the years for *Librivox*, but his main project has been producing a freely available audiobook downloadable version of disabled diaryist W.N.P. Barbellion's complete published work. The talk is free (we welcome donations for Suffolk Sight!) and Tim will also be bringing along his new guide dog.



We welcomed Sarah Tinker to lead our Anniversary service on 23rd April and to join us for a shared lunch afterwards. Sarah was formerly Minister to Kensington Unitarians.

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 Friday 26th May 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