



Evidence for Grant Applications

You will know that we have been fundraising for our Restoration Fund to protect our Grade 1 listed Meeting House for future generations and for the community around us. We have been successful with all our projects, but as the amount we are aiming for is as high as £500,000, and we are a small congregation, we also need support from grants. So far we have been fortunate enough to receive a grant from the Gregson Trust and from Suffolk Historic Churches Trust (both we understand were the maximum possible from those organisations).

Just after the last issue of this newsletter was published, we were asked for evidence of support to prove the relevance of our building to our community as well as to our congregation, to send in as part of our next grant application. This is a potentially large grant and we really need the support. We sent out an appeal by email, by an article in *The Inquirer*, by word of mouth, by letter, by appealing on BBC Radio Suffolk ... and you have all been fantastic! We were able to send in 57 letters, 85 emails and evidence of 1,374 visitors during our Open Days this year. Thank you!

Contents –

1 – Evidence for Grant Applications; Access to the MH
2 – MH AGM; A Happy Congregation; Max and Keira's Law; Events
3 – Funerals in Jamaica and in Kolkata
4 – Funerals cont.; Poem; Birthdays
5 – Services; Updates; Photos; Cartoons; Contacts; Thought for the Month

Access to our Meeting House and Hall

We have been concerned recently about the ease of access to our Meeting House for those of us who are not as lithe as we used to be or who have a mobility problem. It is important for everyone to be able to come into the building for a service, for a visit, or for an event.

After consulting a retired Occupational Therapist with experience of adapting homes and buildings for people with a disability, we have made some initial adjustments. The ramp at the front door to the Meeting House has been reduced in size to make it a little easier to handle – as it is very heavy. Because the building is so old and Grade 1 listed, we are restricted to working round it and cannot make changes to the structure.

In the Hall where we go for coffee after the service, we have added a grab rail to the door frame by the step to make it easier to enter. Already feedback about this has been positive.

These arrangements are a start and we invite anyone with a view about how effective they are or with suggestions about further adaptations to let one of the Trustees know so that we can continue to support people. It is possible that we will be able to make more substantial adaptations (and even toilet facilities in the Meeting House) towards the end of the Restoration Project. Our Property Manager Phil Chatfield is working on our options.

Thank you to David Forsdike for making the current changes possible.

Meeting House Annual General Meeting – Sunday 10th November

All members are invited to attend our AGM after the service on 10th November. Several members of the Trustees are retiring and so we are looking for members to offer their support. If you are considering this, please speak to one of the Trustees.

A Happy Congregation?

Our service on 29th September was taken by Professor Geoffrey Levermore, a member of our Dean Row chapel in Cheshire. His theme was happiness. He looked at the way that happiness has been understood by various philosophers and cultures and how they have suggested it might be pursued – if, indeed, it should be pursued! It was a fascinating and thought-provoking presentation which was greatly appreciated by the congregation and stimulated much discussion and conversation over coffee afterwards.

As a little exercise, Geoffrey invited those present to fill in a card anonymously, indicating on a scale of one to ten how happy they felt now and how happy they expected to feel in the future. The result was duly announced during coffee. The average score for happiness now was 7.3 and the average score for future happiness was 7.2. Geoffrey told us that this was more or less in line with the results in other congregations where he had conducted the exercise. It would seem then, that Unitarians tend towards moderate, though not ecstatic, happiness! We were grateful to Geoffrey for a service that was both enjoyable and instructive and look-forward to welcoming him to the Meeting House again sometime.

Cliff Reed

Max and Keira's Law – on organ donation

In Spring 2020, with the aim of increasing the donation rates of organs for transplant and to help more patients to get transplants, the law will be changing. The difference will be that adults in England will be considered potential donors unless they choose to opt out or are excluded. More than 6000 people in the UK are waiting for a transplant and three people on that list die each day.

Keira Ball, aged 9 died in a road traffic accident in the summer of 2017 and her organs were donated – her kidneys went to two adults, her liver to a baby and her heart to a young boy, also aged 9, named Max Johnson. Hence the names Max and Keira which are linked to the new law. Max's family campaigned for this and the Humanist organisation has also campaigned for this change for many years.

So far no date has been set in Spring for the changeover, so you may like to be proactive and sign up to the NHS Organ Donor Register – on www.organdonation.nhs.uk

This piece was taken from the local Humanists' newsletter.

Events in November

Monday 4th – 2.30pm - Meeting of the Worship Group – to plan and organise services from 1st December onwards. All contributors welcome – contact Linda King on lindapendal@gmail.com as the meeting is at her home.

Thursday 7th – 7pm – Conversation in the Upper Room – last in the series.

Sunday 10th – Annual General Meeting after the service.

Saturday 16th – Trianon Community Concert – Victorian Evening – check out - www.tmg.org.uk

Tuesday 19th – 7pm – Ipswich Faith and Community Forum AGM – at Tower House Community Centre, Tower Street, Ipswich. Let Deni Johnston know if you are going - denisjohnston@btinternet.com

Funeral celebrations

Recently a friend's granddaughter described her experience of funerals – Ciara said – *First there's a sad bit and then a happy bit with cake.*'

Our experience of funerals can be varied and so I invited a couple of people who have had a recent bereavement to share their thoughts and a description of different cultural funeral customs.

Death In Jamaica!

Funerals can be very expensive, and if you're poor even more so. The whole process can last a long time. The rituals, traditions, and doing what the community has come to expect.

The Candlelight Night: people gather at the home of the deceased, candles are lit, there is a photograph of the deceased; men gather around the games table (usually dominos), food is prepared mainly by the women. I have a brother who is a cook so he will be there in the kitchen getting stuck in. Anyone who drops by is fed and watered. People can travel for miles to show their respect and express their condolence to the family.

Nine Night: although it's called Nine Night this is not fixed traditionally at nine nights after the death – basically all these rituals happen on the weekend when people are not working. More food, drinks, games and singing and 'keep watch'. The Rest Home can arrange everything at a price. They will print the programme (order of service), lapel badges with a photograph of the deceased, bookmarks etc. I imagine they have a catalogue that you can pick-and-mix from as you are able to afford, and families feel pressured into getting things they don't need and certainly can't afford if they are not wealthy. The community come together and help the family to dig the grave and again food and drinks are provided. On the day of the funeral, usually in a church even if the deceased has no affiliation. This is a full service which can last two hours or more! Blessing the body: the coffin is brought into place and the priest says appropriate biblical text. Reception of the body: words such as

as "with faith in Jesus Christ, we receive the body of our brother/sister (insert name) for burial. Our brother/sister was washed in Holy Baptism and anointed with the Holy Spirit. Let us, therefore, with confidence, pray to God our Heavenly Father, the Giver of life, that he will raise him/her to perfection in the Company of the Saints". Prayers, hymns, and tributes are followed by a full-on sermon including the Creed, Eucharist and The Agnus Dei. The funeral party will then travel to the cemetery, usually some distance away on the edge of civilization. At the graveside more prayers are said by the priest and the grave is filled in accompanied by singing of songs and choruses which everyone knows by heart. The tombing takes place immediately and is then tiled (for fear of grave robbers). As far as I'm aware there is no crematorium on the island. After a year another ceremony to put up the headstone...more food, drink, and singing. Rest in Peace.

Paulette Reed

Thank you to Paulette whose brother recently died in Jamaica.

A Hindu funeral in Kolkata

In Kolkata (Bengal, India) the Hindu tradition is to burn the body as soon as possible after death at a Ghat – if possible on the bank of the Ganges, but certainly on the bank of a river if the family lives too far from the Ganges. It is very traditional for the funeral to be held at the Varanasi Ghat, which is 800 miles from Kolkata. Some terminally ill people will travel to die in Varanasi because it is said that cremation there 'guarantees' going to Heaven. The body is not hidden away in a coffin, but left visible (covered in a white new cloth with only face left open) and the eldest son lights the fire in the mouth (this symbolises that the spirit is free to cut off all the emotions and bindings of the earth and free to go to heaven) of their relative to start the burning. The ashes and any remains (mainly the umbilicus is not burnt) are allowed to float away in the river. Everyone wears white, the men don't shave (till the final funeral day and

A Hindu Funeral in Kolkata – cont.

have boiled rice & vegetables: **No** non-vegetarian food) and the tenth day after the death there is a sort of celebration (Hindu priest comes and chants Mantras from Veda & Upanishad; the ancient tradition dates back to 2500 B.C and final offerings are made by his/her relatives. The choicest foods are cooked and outfits are placed in front of the photo, etc. The priest's chanting of Mantras relates to the cut of the bondage from the earth to recognise that the person's spirit has now left the Earth.

There is also a big tradition to feed the poor people on the day of the funeral, called "Kangali Bhojon" (feed the poor & destitute).

On the 9th day, after the death, there is a ceremony called "Niyam Bhango" (break the rituals); when men shave for the first time since death and also shave head, as a mark of respect to the deceased and thereafter close family members sit together and can have non-vegetarian food; especially fish in Bengal.

Subrata Banerjea

Thank you to Subrata whose friend recently died in Kolkata.

At the Octagon Meeting House in Norwich recently the Memorial Service for Sophia Hankinson was held and one of the poems read at this service follows –

She Let Go

She let go.

She let go. Without a thought or a word, she let go.

She let go of the fear.

She let go of the judgements.

She let go of the confluence of opinions swarming around her head.

She let go of the committee of indecision within her.

She let go of all the 'right' reasons.

Wholly and completely, without hesitation or worry,

She just let go.

She didn't ask anyone for advice.

She didn't read a book on how to let go.

She didn't search the scriptures.

She just let go.

She let go of all the memories that held her back.

She let go of all the anxiety that kept her from moving forward.

She let go of all the planning and all of the calculations about how to do it just right.

She didn't promise to let go.

She didn't journal about it.

She didn't write the date in her Day-Timer.

She made no public announcement and put no ad in the paper.

She didn't check the weather report or read her daily horoscope.

She just let go.

No one was around when it happened.

There was no applause or congratulations.

No one thanked her or praised her.

No one noticed a thing.

Like a leaf falling from a tree, she just let go.

There was no effort.

There was no struggle.

It wasn't good and it wasn't bad.

It was what it was and it is just that.

In the space of letting go, she let it all be.

A small smile came over her face.

A light breeze blew through her.

And the sun and the moon shone for evermore.

By Safire Rose

Thank you for all the contributions towards this topic ... and if you need cheering up, remember Ciara and the cake!

Birthdays in November

Happy birthday this month to-

Hilary Hamilton on 11th; Franklyn Bradbrook on 21st and Mathilda Hawes on 24th.

We hope you have a great cake too!

Services in November

All are at 10.45 and all will be led by Minister Lewis Connolly.

Sunday 10th – Remembrance Service

Sunday 17th – Communion after the service for those who choose to stay

Sunday 24th – Saint Cecelia – musical service –

please let Lewis know about your contribution....

Updates

Maggie Hodges will be having an operation on 31st October – we wish her a speedy and pain free recovery.

Thank you to Adam Whybray who has updated our website – www.unitarianipswich.com and to Riena Jackson who has taken the extra photos of the Meeting House to illustrate the pages about our building, which is really important as we promote our Restoration Fund.



Some photos from our Remembrance Day service last year – taken by Maggie Hodges.



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 Thursday

28th November – 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 415936 email revdlewisconnolly@gmail.com

Website - <http://unitarianipswich.com>

Thought for the month

Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value
– Albert Einstein