



Celebrations



What a celebration of our Restoration Project we had on Saturday 25th September. After a programme of talks about the work and the history of our Meeting House, we gathered in the courtyard to chat, to discuss the project and to enjoy the sunshine and bubbly. Thanks to all the helpers – who put up tents, served drinks, made and served cake, took photos, arranged flowers, welcomed visitors and entertained – as well as helped take it all down again!

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We welcomed the Mayor of Ipswich Cllr Elizabeth Hughes and town centre councillors as well as our MP Tom Hunt –



(l to r – Andrew Gibbs; Paulette Reed; Riena Jackson; Ann Baeppler; Tom Hunt; Linda King; Tessa Forsdike; Robert Waller – past and present Trustees)



Architect Stuart Edgar from KLH gave a sterling presentation, covering both his work on the project and Phil Chatfield's, who was sadly unable to join us at the last minute. We hope he feels better very soon.

Friends Group Launch



The Friends of the Ipswich Unitarian Meeting House group was launched publicly at the Celebration, and we thank all the Friends who helped make the event successful.

To join as a Friend, contact Ann Baepler on annbaepler@gmail.com



Mayor Cllr Elizabeth Hughes was pleased to be invited to the Celebration.

Trianon Concert – Saturday 2nd October

Do join us for the Trianon Concert of Music at 7.30pm in aid of the Meeting House. This will be the first of what we hope will be many events we can now hold in our restored Meeting House.

Tickets are available from Robert Waller – 07732 700082 – or turn up on the night!

Birthdays in October

Happy birthday to Maggie Hodges on 17th; to Isaac Shaikh on 18th; to Sandra Hawes, Louis Hawes and Edmund Bradbrook all on 25th – and special birthday wishes to Andrew Gibbs who will celebrate a special number on 27th. We hope you all have many more wonderful years to celebrate.

Special Birthday Announcement

Matilda Elsie Last was born 27th August 2021 to Dulcie and Jordan and brother Zephyr, granddaughter to Barbara Clarke. Congratulations!

The Lindsey Press –

an invitation to join our team

The Lindsey Press Panel is seeking new members as it prepares to explore possibilities beyond traditional publications and aims to reach out to new audiences, beyond the Unitarian movement. We hope to bring people with skills and experience in writing, publishing and communication together with people with innovative and bold ideas. If you have an interest or talent in these areas, we want to hear from you! The Lindsey Press is run by a panel of volunteers, together with the General Assembly's Chief Officer and Communications Officer. It meets three times a year, usually via Zoom, and its members correspond via email in between meetings.

We are looking for new members to join the panel as we ask questions like: What should the role of the Lindsey Press be in the years ahead? How can we help people to respond to the enormous spiritual and practical challenges that the world faces today? How might we think beyond traditional books? We invite you to get in touch with us to share your ideas, expertise, and vision with us - and consider joining our panel.

[If you're interested and/or would like to know more, email Rory Castle Jones by the end of November at the latest.](#)

Summer BBQ



Thanks to everyone for helping us run the annual BBQ in Maggie's garden – another sunny afternoon of chat and great food.

Poetry Group

Simon Armitage will be the featured poet at our next poetry meeting on 21st October at 2 pm. Contact Riena Jackson for details – all welcome.

Book Group

For our next meeting (via Zoom) on Thursday 4th November at 19.00, we have chosen a non-fiction book to read and discuss –

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot – Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor black tobacco farmer whose cells—taken without her knowledge in 1951—became one of the most important tools in medicine, vital for developing the polio vaccine, cloning, gene mapping, in vitro fertilization, and more. Henrietta's cells have been bought and sold by the billions, yet she remains virtually unknown, and her family can't afford health insurance. Soon to be made into an HBO movie by Oprah Winfrey and Alan Ball, this *New York Times* bestseller takes readers on an extraordinary journey, from the "colored" ward of Johns Hopkins Hospital in the 1950s to stark white laboratories with freezers filled

with HeLa cells, from Henrietta's small, dying hometown of Clover, Virginia, to East Baltimore today, where her children and grandchildren live and struggle with the legacy of her cells. *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* tells a riveting story of the collision between ethics, race, and medicine; of scientific discovery and faith healing; and of a daughter consumed with questions about the mother she never knew. It's a story inextricably connected to the dark history of experimentation on African Americans, the birth of bioethics, and the legal battles over whether we control the stuff we're made of.

All are welcome to join us for the one meeting or regularly – contact Tessa for the link on tessa@tessajordan.co.uk

Services in October

3rd October - Rev Cliff Reed, Minister Emeritus
- **Harvest Festival** – bring dried or tinned food for distribution afterwards to the Women's Aid Project. We will also share a Potluck lunch after the service – so bring what you like to eat!
10th October - Ali Mercer, Ipswich Unitarian living in Devon who will join us via Zoom
17th October - Beverley Levy, Chairperson Suffolk Liberal Jewish Community
24th October - Stefan Freedman
31st October - Andrew Benedict - East of England Faiths Agency

The Moon: Meet our Nearest Neighbour

Ipswich Art Gallery – open until 10th October. Discover what the Moon is made of, how it has influenced our history, culture and natural world and how we have explored it from ancient times to the present and future. This touring exhibition features fascinating objects such as a large inflatable Moon, scientific instruments, and actual Moon rock on loan from Bespoke Scientific.

Adventure

Adventure—the tang of the curved path ahead, leading onward toward who knows what... Butterflies tickled Lorna’s stomach as she contemplated the places she could go. Where would it be this time—the onion domes of Moscow? The fair cities of Spain, wrapped in a dusty haze as they simmered in the heat, enveloped by the scent of lemons? Or perhaps the ancient deserts holding the Pyramids with their inscrutable mysteries?

The adverts, which used to arrive as brochures, now came via email to Lorna and her husband, Leonard. Lorna thrilled each time a new destination appeared in her inbox. “Look, Leonard, doesn’t this trip to Egypt sound fabulous? Or how about that trip to Russia we cancelled a few years back. We could fly directly from Stansted—wouldn’t that be great?”

“That really does sound interesting. Let’s think about it,” was Leonard’s stock response, as he briefly looked up from his latest mystery. *“We’ll see how soon we can travel again.”*

For the past 18 months, Covid had changed everything. They’d been trapped in the States and as retirees, they were the lucky ones: they hadn’t gotten sick, didn’t need to go to work, could attend their groups on Zoom, and limit their exposure to others. But Leonard was occasionally teary-eyed.

“It’s really tough not to see my sons and hold them,” he said, *“especially since our grandsons, Michael and David, are growing so fast. And I really miss William in London.”*

“It’s so hard,” Lorna responded with a hug. *“At least we’re in the same bubble as Elizabeth. But that doesn’t make it any easier not seeing the others. And it’s such a pity Lizzie could only have a tiny garden wedding, even though it was lovely and intimate with just family.”*

Thank goodness Lorna and Leonard had been able to have a few friends visit on their deck last summer and fall, masked and socially distanced. Each couple had brought their own wine and snacks, at least until it got too cold to sit outside, even with the heaters blasting full force.

“Let’s start dreaming about where we want to go next and think about when we might be able travel,” persisted Lorna. She had to agree, though: the time of free exploration, the joy of tasting the new, had dimmed, as a new variant of Covid began spreading quickly.

But as the landscape narrowed, a different sense of adventure began to emerge. Perhaps it was enough to breathe the heady scent of lavender in the garden and hear the rumble of the bees foraging on the purple buddleia.

“It feels so good to have walked five miles,” Leonard said after they finished one of their daily rambles in the park. *“Yep, a good muscle ache,”* replied Lorna, *“By the way, did you see the shape and colour of those clouds over the pond? Gorgeous! And I loved seeing the lambs.”*

Perhaps the true adventure lies in how precious it is simply to be with family and friends. To deepen our spirituality. Maybe it’s about exploring the heart and the world within, choosing to be fully present in each moment. At some point, it would be time to travel freely again. But for now, Lorna decided, the ultimate adventure was taking joy by the hand and being here in the now.

5th August 2021 – by Suzanne Cleary Cohen

Suzanne and her husband Dan are Unitarian Universalists from the States and before Covid, were frequent visitors and contributors to the Ipswich Meeting House. They pass on their warmest greetings to Ipswich church members and friends. “Lorna” and “Leonard” are their alter-egos, although the story is true. It was originally written as an assignment for Suzanne’s English writing group.

We hope to welcome them back to the UK and to our Meeting House in October (even if briefly) as they return for a family wedding.

Choices and at what cost

When, why, and how is it permissible for a ten-year-old to decide and persuade several professionals that it was necessary to prescribe puberty blockers? At age ten, a child, with limited knowledge and life experience ought to be out climbing trees, reading books, having fun and games with a bunch of friends.

Chances are the idea came from being glued to a screen connected to a website or a social media platform with invisible and unknown person or persons giving encouragement to one so young and impressionable – fueling the flames of an immature mind. Now in their mid-twenties, they've come to realise that it was a huge mistake. Is this a form of bullying? Is it child abuse?

All this is done free of charge at point of delivery via the NHS. Where were the parents/guardians when all this is happening? Where are they now?

At the other end you will find someone who has lived a long time, clocked up a bucketful of experiences, but who at the ripe old age of eighty-nine, in severe pain from an old injury, or with some other more debilitating condition, is not allowed to make the decision to end a life they find so unbearable. Even with the very best care and medication as provided by the NHS such a person has to suffer in agony; for how long no one can say.

Most people understand that the NHS is not awash with a bottomless pit of money; yet many expect so much. The NHS was set up to provide medical care to the poorest citizens “from the cradle to the grave”. The wealthiest have always paid for such care because they can afford it. Now others succumb to the pressures of private health insurance, and in many instances it's the same NHS trained surgeon, nurse, dentist *etcetera*, who will acquiesce.

The NHS cannot afford to foot the bill for everyone who comes along wanting alteration to parts or all of their bodies – nose, cheekbone, bum lift, sexual organ augmentation, liposuction – for psychological reasons, and then later on in the cold light of day when they come to the realisation that they are still not ‘happy’ and so they return to the same NHS to demand the alterations be reversed; when that doesn't happen they head off to the legal system for financial recompense!

Paulette Reed

Appeal to save dying heritage craft skills

The Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) has launched an appeal to help save traditional heritage craft skills, which are at risk of being lost forever.

The shortfall in traditional skills and an ageing workforce throughout England has been known in the heritage sector for some time. According to a recent report from The Heritage Crafts Association, the crafts fall into different categories of endangerment.

<http://heritagecrafts.org.uk/redlist/categories-of-risk/>

Some of the crafts on the ‘endangered’ list include flintknapping, certain types of thatching and lead working. Some of the skills under threat include traditional joinery, lime plastering, stone masonry, thatching and glazing. If we do not act there is a real risk that these skills could be lost. CCT is appealing for donations to its Craft Skills Appeal, which will help in the training of apprentices, supporting the livelihood of talented craftspeople, and in the continuation of this expertise and specialist traditional knowledge.

Find out more here:

<https://www.visitchurches.org.uk/heritageskills/>

Walpole Chapel - A detour home after visiting John Ellis



On a fine sunny afternoon earlier this month, Paulette & I visited the small congregational chapel in Walpole, Near Halesworth. The chapel was closed in 1970 and was taken over by the Historic Chapels Trust in 1995. It is Grade 2 listed.

Originally a domestic farmhouse, Walpole chapel was adapted to serve the needs of a dissenting community in the area in 1647 or 9. It was registered for worship in 1689 and enlarged before 1695. The building is of timber frame and wattle & daub construction and has a double hipped roof supported by three wooden columns along the middle – thought to have been ships’ masts.

There are many similarities with our own Meeting House except it is, as the local key holder describes it, ‘a hammer & nail job’, with many of the interior fittings being made of recycled wood - like old doors! There are unvarnished box pews and a gallery on three sides facing a platform pulpit (similar to that in Framlingham) with a sounding board. Semi-circular headed windows stand either side of the pulpit and along with other windows results in the interior being flooded with light... a bonus, as the building has no electricity except to the school room alongside. I imagine on a winter’s day the building would be cold and dark but still exuding the feeling of peacefulness.

The brick flooring gives a picture of how the flooring must have looked in our own Meeting House. Worn with the feet of chapel goers throughout almost three and a half centuries, it tells a story in itself.

The chapel exudes a feeling of peacefulness and somehow, of a continuity which I find unusual in a building no longer used for regular public worship.

Outside, the burial ground is only cut once or twice a year. The ground is special in that it is old pastureland and is the nurturing earth for over 40 species of wildflowers.

There are now major problems being faced with the structure having in the recent past been cement rendered (sounds familiar!) and fund raising is in progress to raise money to have it re-rendered in the appropriate materials. Without a congregation the task of doing this falls to the Friends of Walpole Chapel.

The chapel holds an annual carol service & concerts and can be hired for special events.

www.walpoleoldchapel.org

By Linda King

Correction – in the September issue in the article about Cliff Reed’s book we made an error about the name of the person interviewing him – it was Kate Dean. Apologies to her.

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 September 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 present circumstances don’t determine where you can go; they merely determine where you start.
- Nido Qubein