



Distinction Award



L to R - Robert Keeble (KLH); Adrian Valiant (FA Valiant); Mayor Cllr Elizabeth Hughes; Linda King; Tessa Forsdike; Paulette Reed; Stuart Edgar (KLH)

The Ipswich Society awarded us a Distinction for our Restoration Project - something which is rarely given, so we are very honoured. Linda King received the certificate which will be proudly on display at the Meeting House. Certificates were also presented to the architects KLH and the building firm FA Valiant in recognition of their valuable work.

Contents –

- 1 – Distinction Award; AGM
- 2 – AGM cont.; Friends, Members, Congregation; Anglia Baroque; David Webb
- 3 – Gone off with a Lady to Scotland
- 4 – Saving Eve
- 5 – Saving Eve cont.; Services; Birthdays
- 6 – The Holidays; Lighthouse Women’s Aid update
- 7 – Book Group; Questioning; Diversity Lunch; Poetry Group; TWAM; Thought for the Month

AGM

We held our annual general meeting after the service on 14th November when Linda King retired as a Trustee after many years of dedicated service for which we are indebted. As a small token of our thanks, we gave her some flowers. One of Linda’s passions (as well as the Meeting House) is local history and she intends to spend her time sorting some of our old papers and the archives – another service for which we are grateful.



Photo – Maggie Hodges

AGM continued

We are pleased to welcome Adam Whybray as a Trustee. Adam has supported us with the design and updating of our website for some time and we welcome his new energy onto the committee.

Friends, Members and Congregation ... lend me your ears ...

(sorry I couldn't resist!).

Since the Friends of the Ipswich Unitarian Meeting House group has been set up some people have been a little confused about the distinction between being a Member of the Meeting House and joining the Friends group as a Friend. So here is an explanation.

If you come to our services now and then, take part in the singing and perhaps also volunteer for some of the 'jobs' like arranging the flowers or welcoming people, then you are one of our valued congregation.

If your commitment to the Meeting House extends to wanting to support it financially and to having a vote in matters such as choosing a new Minister, reviewing the annual reports and holding the Trustees to account, then you may join officially as a Member, which involves agreeing to pay a regular financial contribution (of your own choice) and we pay a quota to the General Assembly for you.

If you prefer to keep your connection to the Meeting House completely secular, but have an interest in its history, future and beauty, then you may join the Friends group. You may occasionally come to a service, maybe at Christmas and you are welcome any time. The Friends group raises funds for the Meeting House and Friends can claim a discount for events organised by this group. Anyone can join as a Friend – including Meeting House members and people from the congregation.

Anglia Baroque Concert

The Friends group organised a concert on 20th November when this quintet of skilled musicians entertained us with music from the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries on instruments similar to those which would have been used at that time. The specially made harpsichord played by Christopher Dexter-Mills was celebrating its first birthday and we are honoured to have been there for its first performance in public. Rosy Payne both sang and played lead violin, Rachel Fulcher was on cello, Andrew Spencer and Stephen Cheek each played violin and viola. It felt fitting to hear music from the time our Meeting House was first built. Thank you to them all. The evening raised £438 for our Meeting House.



... and there's more to come!

David Webb – my life as a Hi-Di-Hi

Yellowcoat – an illustrated talk of how David and his brother (the Webb twins) ended up in the BBC comedy series. **On Friday 10th December at 7.30pm.** Tickets £12 – discount for Friends.



Gone off with a lady to Scotland!



In December 1776 Rochement Barbauld of Palgrave was asked to preach at Ipswich, as the minister “was gone off with a lady to Scotland”.¹ The minister was James Pilkington; the lady was Ann Clarke, only daughter of Peter Clarke, a Senior Portman in Ipswich. They married at Gretna on 16th December.

Rev. Barbauld’s wife Anna Letitia was astonished that “the prim & the prudent Mr P had taken so spirited a step” and baffled, as Ann was of age, and it was understood that her father had given them permission to marry in May. It was perhaps friction in the Clarke household that drove Ann to such an escapade. Her parents no doubt wished her to marry within their circle, and notably they attended a different meeting; Ann had been baptised at Tacket Street Independent Chapel by her great grandfather Rev. William Notcutt, whose portrait still hangs there.

The couple seem to have embarked on or just after Ann’s 22nd birthday on 12th December, sailing to Tynemouth or Newcastle, and hiring post-chaises for the 60-70 miles of hilly terrain to Gretna. There was no romance to a Gretna wedding, which was a rough and ready affair, and the journeys must have been gruelling.

As a dissenter, Ann would have been better educated than most women of her time, and it appears that compatibility rather than money attracted James Pilkington. Compatibility with his congregation, however, was not so assured. No doubt encouraged to seek a situation elsewhere, the Pilkingtons had moved to Derby by 1778, where they would have had connections through the Warrington Academy network.

James Pilkington had been born in the early 1750s into

a dissenting family in Horwich in Lancashire. A windfall inheritance by his grandfather enabled James and his relatives to further their education (and incidentally to found what became the well-known Glass Company). After Rivington Grammar School, Pilkington attended Warrington Academy, then in 1774 he and fellow student Robert Alderson came to be assistants to William Wood at Ipswich Presbyterian meeting.

Pilkington accepted an invitation to succeed William Wood in January 1775, but he had not been chosen unanimously; nevertheless, he intended to be useful and agreeable to all and to have the interest and prosperity of the whole society at heart. He also asked for three Sabbath days off, in order to visit his friends at a distance.¹ Unusually for Presbyterians, Pilkington, Barbauld, and Alderson (by then Assistant Minister at Norwich), along with John Matthew Beynon of Yarmouth, had an ordination ceremony in Palgrave in September 1775.

The move to Friargate Chapel in Derby in 1777/78 was to an Assistant role at £40 per annum. After the incumbent’s death in 1779, Pilkington shared the ministry with Nathaniel Phillips, and earned £45 p.a., which was raised to £50 in 1781. Friargate was in the midst of industrial innovation with some prosperous congregants, such as the Crompton and Strutt families. Here too there was disunity over Unitarianism, and Pilkington lost some of his flock, but overall it was a comfortable situation which he kept for nearly twenty years, and which also allowed him time to write.

With acknowledgement to an unpublished biography of James Pilkington by John Titford (2016) and to ‘Anna Letitia Barbauld : voice of the Enlightenment’ by William McCarthy (2008).

¹ Letter from Pilkington, in records for the St.Nicholas Street Chapel, Suffolk County Record Office, Ipswich, ref.FK4/1/15.

By Melanie Winterbotham

Saving Eve: The Unitarian Women's Group Annual Conference, October 22nd – 24th, 2021

What can each of us do in our everyday practices to prevent contributing to further climate change, and to ensure that a target of 1.5 Celsius temperature increase remain realistic? After the inevitable postponement of 2020's Unitarian Women's Group annual conference due to Covid, the co-organisers, Sue MacFarlane and Jo O'Sullivan, reframed the conference theme to focus on our individual and collective roles in fostering the necessary changes that promote planetary, as well as spiritual, health, not just survival.

Not only does the theme carry an obvious urgency, but with COP26 following close on the heels of the UWG conference, the meeting of twenty-seven Unitarian women at the *Nightingale Centre* in Great Hucklow, Derbyshire, felt aptly topical. The global and the local converged, but with the important difference that the participants of the UWG conference foregrounded the intersections of gender (and other markers of social identity, such as race, ability, age, nationality, etc.,) with consumption practices, the extractive industries, and their harmful impact on climate change. Four of us from the East Anglian contingent, mindful of the need to limit our carbon footprint, made the journey North and back on a single tank of petrol thanks to Linda King who drove Paulette Reed, and Angela Cowling (Bury St Edmunds Meeting House) and me to the conference.

If our fossil fuel consumption was frugal, the presence of East Anglian Unitarian women at the conference was encouragingly robust. Of the twenty-seven women participating, we 'latter day Angles,' as Angela Cowling dubbed us, made up an enthusiastic group of six. As we discovered during the weekend, our East Anglian group, with our regular monthly meetings and shared activities, embodies an interconnectedness and closeness that is rather unusual in the national context. Members in other parts of the country experience greater isolation, and to some extent, looked to our group as a model of ways to build and enhance greater regional interconnectedness. So, what did twenty-seven Unitarian women do over the weekend to rethink our quotidian practices in relation to climate change?

Trowels, Birders' Books and Crime Fiction

Our first plenary session, Friday evening, provided the opportunity for sharing of reflections on what got each

of us through the periods of lockdown as well as introductions with a brief overview of what we consider defines us as individuals. If any of us was weary from our travels, the lively buzz of contributions gave no evidence of this. The energy level was high, participants eager to learn about, or catch up with, each other. From here, we ended the evening with a shift to prayer and contemplation Epilogue led by Dorothy Haughton.

Saturday morning's programme was dedicated to two practical workshops: '*Make your Own Natural Cleaning Products,*' and '*Sewing for Making and Mending and Meditation.*' If a good many of us still rely on detergents for our laundry and on the house cleaning products on supermarket shelves, we're also painfully aware of the devastating impact on planetary health of the products themselves as well as their plastic containers. And of course, consuming these products is costly for our household budgets. Sue MacFarlane's workshop led us through the simple steps that enable us to use non-toxic ingredients such as lemon juice and white vinegar in our homemade house-cleaning products; she urged us to replace our reliance on laundry detergents with refillable and re-usable *Eco-Eggs* that contain no harmful chemicals but use two types of natural mineral to clean. Throughout the workshop, the room was a-hum with tips and advice about bulk purchases of ingredients, storage of homemade cleaning products, and it was evident that conversion to natural cleaning products among members is well underway.

The second workshop, '*Sewing for Making, Mending and Meditation,*' addressed another aspect of contemporary consumption gone awry: our national obsession with fast fashion and the devastating environmental impacts on developing and industrialized countries of the production-consumption route that feeds the desire for new clothes in the West. Re-purposing and mending clothing as well as buying second-hand clothing interrupts and slows the pace of consumption, as we know. But Sue MacFarlane's workshop went further, and also asked us to focus on the meditative and contemplative practice of sewing. The measured, repetitive, and steady movements of sewing constitute a relaxing counterbalance to the

Saving Eve – cont.

body-mind physiological response to stress (commonly called the fight-or-flight response). Some of us came equipped with sewing equipment and fabric, and dedicated our time to creating bags, spectacle cases, and other small items, while others adapted the strategy of measured, repetitive movements to focus on knitting, or colouring.

With the abundance of practical guidance and information in both morning workshops, our Saturday afternoon provided the opportunity to develop our engagement with our learning, to enjoy a long walk in the surrounding countryside, or settle into small clusters to catch up with others' news. Five o'clock signalled the gathering of the entire group for drinks and nibbles, and the preparations for an evening of *'Bring and Share'* entertainment. What would this entail? As one of the four newcomers to the conference, this represented a step into the unknown for me. However, Angela Cowling's individual inspiration matched by collective action came to the rescue. Angela Cowling had penned a cleverly humorous poem, about our latter-day Angles' most recent discussion of Autumn, a poem to be performed by our East Anglian members. And so it was that the six of us presented and performed as an ensemble!

Farewells and Gratitude

Our final morning, Sunday, we all gathered first for a service in the Old Chapel opposite the Nightingale Centre and focused our thoughts and prayers on what we felt grateful for: an opportunity to reflect back on not only our weekend together, but on its place in the context of the lives we'd soon be returning to. Business at the AGM was concluded, and before setting off back home, we turned our attention to plans for 2022.

Next year's conference theme organized by Danielle Wilson is *'White Supremacy,'* and members are preparing through a Zoom reading group focused on Layla F. Saad's *Me and White Supremacy: How to Recognise Your Privilege, Combat Racism and Change the World* (2020).

By Liz Constable

Services in December

5th - Tristan Jovanovic - Kensington Unitarians

12th - Rev. Matthew Smith, Minister to Framlingham & Bury Unitarians

18th - at 6pm - CAROL SERVICE Led by Rev Cliff Reed, Minister Emeritus

Please decide on your contribution to this service (song, poem, reading, musical interlude) and let Cliff know asap.

19th - Ali Mercer, Ipswich Unitarian living in Devon.

25th - CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE Led by Rev Cliff Reed.

26th - Boxing Day Service co-ordinated by Robert Waller

Over the Christmas & New Year period, finding service leaders takes a little more effort than usual.

Fortunately, we have the services of our Minister Emeritus for Christmas Day. Our organist Robert Waller has offered to co-ordinate the Boxing Day Service and Liz Constable with Paulette Reed will coordinate the service on the 2nd January.

Robert would be very pleased to receive offers of readings for the 26th December and if you are unsure as to what is required, please see Robert after service.

With many thanks to all both near and far who have led services throughout the year and to all those who have come in person or zoomed in to listen and join in with our communal worship.

Season's greetings, Linda King.

Birthdays in November and December

We hope all those who celebrated their birthday in November had a great time ... and apologies for omitting their names last month – Hilary Hamilton on 11th; Franklyn Bradbrook on 21st; Mathilda Hawes on 24th

In December we wish the following people a happy birthday – Ray Seal on 12th; Edward Shaw on 22nd; Carol Gibbs on 26th; John Hamilton and Liz Constable on 30th

This is a somewhat belated but none-the-less heartfelt thank you for the beautiful card and good wishes on my 'special' birthday. I had such a lovely day and was thoroughly spoilt from start to finish. I feel blessed to have reached this particular milestone! With gratitude and warmest greetings, Ann Baepler

The Holidays

November marks the season of brisk walks wearing muddy boots through leaves that have drifted from the trees. In America, the holidays begin the end of November with Thanksgiving, which has always been one of my favourite holidays. For the carnivores, there's turkey and stuffing to anticipate, cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes, and of course, pumpkin pie. There's the fragrance of roasting turkey combined with scents of nutmeg, ginger, cinnamon, and cloves in a Thanksgiving kitchen that blends perfectly with the crisp, colourful days of fall.

Beyond anticipating the special foods of this holiday, there's the sense of gathering with family and friends to share a meal and acknowledge the blessings in our lives. While I appreciate the distinct foods, the Thanksgiving table set with glowing candles, perhaps handmade place cards and flowers the colour of fall leaves, best of all is the time, before or after the meal, when we go round the table, everyone describing what they are grateful for in the past year.

Gratitude plays a bigger role than ever as we approach the second full year of dealing with Covid. Many simple things, perhaps taken for granted in the past, are among the most special now—times like being with family and friends for holidays, or anytime, really. Perhaps we are learning from the falling leaves to let go of those things that no longer are important or no longer serve us, and instead, embrace what is life giving and brings joy.

Soon the season of Advent will begin, as the days grow shorter and we anticipate the return of the Light. There will be Christmas feasts of joy and celebration to prepare, perhaps travel to visit extended family. Soon it will be time to go inward, to sit by winter's proverbial fire or with candles lit and dream the new year into being. It will be time for quiet pleasures, like taking naps on frigid, frosty days, considering what to add to our spring gardens and what new adventures to seek or journeys to undertake.

But for now, I am sitting with gratitude in my heart in preparation for Thanksgiving. Whether you officially celebrate this holiday or not, I wish you a time of personal thanksgiving and recalling with loved ones all the good that life has provided you.

by Suzanne Cleary Cohen

Lighthouse Women's Aid – update

We are pleased that Lighthouse are now using our Upper Hall fortnightly for interviews and confidential chats with clients.

We have also prepared care packs for them to give to women and families who have left home suddenly with nothing. Thank you to our volunteers who have sewn and filled the bags –



We will also be hosting two Domestic Abuse Awareness presentations – an afternoon session on Thursday 3rd February at 2.30 and an evening session on Tuesday 15th February at 7pm.

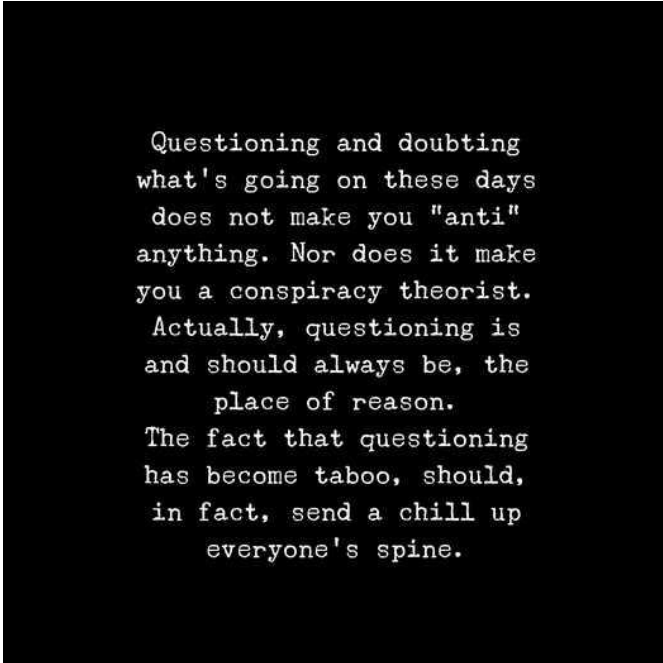
Katherine Ahluwalia from Lighthouse will be coming to talk to us and we will serve tea and coffee afterwards so people can mingle and ask individual questions. These sessions are open to everyone – male and female. The more that people know about the background to domestic violence and abuse, the more likely it is they will recognise when someone is in need of support and they will have a better idea of the best way to offer that support.

Please publicise these dates.

If you would like to offer support or contributions to the care packs, please speak to Tessa Forsdike or Karen Poulter.

Book Group

The next meeting is on Thursday 13th January at 7pm when we will be discussing the recent Booker Prize winner – 'The Promise' by Damon Galgut. All are welcome to join us – ask Tessa for the Zoom link.



The above quotation was submitted by Linda King – she found it on a local faith and spirituality site.

Diversity in our Communities

Free Networking Lunch



Tuesday 7th December
Ipswich County Library
10:00am - 12:30pm



Poetry Group

– We will not be meeting in December, so our next gathering will be on Thursday 27th January 2022 when we will be looking at the poetry of Gillian Clarke, who was the National Poet of Wales from 2008 – 2016. Anybody is welcome to join us – just let Riena Jackson or myself know.
Ann Baeppler

TWAM



You might just recognise David Forsdike's photo on the side of this Tools with a Mission van ...? If you have a clear out of your shed or office, he will be happy to take any spare tools to TWAM in January.

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 30th December by email to

ipswichunitarian@gmail.com or post to 48 Crabbe Street, Ipswich IP4 5HS

The January issue will be later and thinner than usual because of holidays.

To contact our Secretary ring 01473 728498 email tessa@tessajordan.co.uk

Website – www.unitarianipswich.com

Thought for the month

Where there is faith there is love, where there is love there is peace,

Where there is peace there is blessing, where there is blessing there is God.

Where there is God – there is no need.

Translation of Hungarian words