



Marriage of Edward to Anna



The marriage of Edward James Heaver Shaw to Anna Elizabeth Purser took place at St Andrew's Church, Raveningham, Norfolk on the 11th April 2016.

Edward is the oldest grandson of Linda King.
We wish them both a happy life together!

Contents

1 – Marriage of Edward and Anna; Visiting from across the World; Curiosa CD launch
2 – Naming Ceremony for Niall; Visting the Museum of Faith; Services – June and July
3 – Bereavements for our congregation
4 – The Ecstasy and the Laundry;
5 – Ecstasy cont.; Unitarian Meeting House in Exeter; Joke; Book Group
6 – Unitarians in East Anglia; Birthdays; Little Poems
7 – Mike Medhurst; Windrush Celebrations; Thought for the Month; Contacts

Visiting from across the world



These three men were at the service on Sunday 3rd May when they all happened to be in Ipswich. Some of you, who have been connected with the Meeting House for many years will remember (l to r) Stephen Reed, Clive Jordan and Edmund Reed when they were much younger and were attending our Sunday school.

Curiosa – CD launch



Jorge Jimenez and Joy Smith entertained us royally on 8th May and we look forward to their next visit.

Naming ceremony for Niall



Minister Emeritus Rev Cliff Reed was honoured to lead a naming ceremony for his great grandson Niall on Sunday 3rd May – here he is pictured with his Mum Jorjia Reed and the two godparents, Joshua Reed and Jessica Cleary.

Visiting the Museum of Faith, 7 March 2026

The Museum of Faith is, in its own words “A unique museum exploring 6,000 years of British history through the lens of faith” and to my knowledge, the only one in the UK dedicated to exploring our national history of religious and spiritual practices. As Thomas and Brigitte McCready were visiting the North to lead worship for us on Sunday, we three, joined by visiting Unitarian Roberta Wedge, decided to pay a visit.

The Museum forms part of the Bishop Auckland Project, a massive regeneration project which is clearly having a big influence on the entire town. We spent an interesting afternoon exploring the museum, which, as a potted history of religion in the UK, is a pretty good summary, beginning with what we know of prehistoric spiritual views, and exploring the Roman and Viking eras before the more familiar (to many of us) history of Christianity. It pays due regard to all religions in the UK, including our long history of Judaism and

the arrival of other religions with increased migration in recent centuries.

If you’re wondering, Unitarians are not mentioned by name, but Dissenters certainly are, which included us! The Museum is more of an overview of history rather than an in-depth exploration of its different aspects, which, given that it took us over an hour to explore (and you certainly could take longer) is probably about right. Perhaps in later years, the upstairs gallery space will focus on different aspects of religions in the UK. We enjoyed our visit, and it’s worth a trip, although if you are going to go there, I’d recommend arriving early enough to get the most value out of your ticket, which gives you access to other parts of the Bishop Auckland Project. An interesting trip!

By Louise Reeve

This article was first published in the Newcastle newsletter, and we thank Louise for allowing us to include it in ours.

Services for June

7th - Lynne Davies, Octagon Unitarian Chapel, Norwich.

14th - Lizzie Kingston Harrison. Minister in training, Ipswich.

21st - Robert Waller. Ipswich Unitarians. Fathers' Day

28th - Lizzie Kingston Harrison. Minister in training. Pride Service.

Services for July

5th - Lynne Davies. Octagon Unitarian Chapel, Norwich.

12th - Lizzie Kingston Harrison. Minister in training Ipswich

12th July 3pm. Unitarians in East Anglia gathering, organised by the East Anglian Unitarian Women's Group.

19th - Lizzie Kingston Harrison. Minister in training Ipswich.

26th - John Quill.

Bereavements for our congregation

Within a very short space of time, just six weeks, the congregation learned of the death of three people connected to members of our community.

Angus Hamilton aged 57

Jenny Pike in her nineties

Ben Forsdike aged 47

We were all shocked and saddened, not knowing really how to respond to each other and the bereaved, Rosemary, Kate, Tessa and David.

We just want to take time to say thank you for the love and hugs received, they meant so much.

Rosemary Hamilton, Tessa and David Forsdike

This is a poem written for Angus -

The Women around his Bed

His sister Rachel, massaged lotion into his swollen legs, he gave a thumbs up with love.

Hilary his sister gently trimmed his nails, hands and feet, she got a big smile with love.

Janine placed a gold ring on his finger and he one on hers. Their eyes met and held with love.

Ophelia, eldest daughter, talked of the many things they had done together especially in the last year, he squished her hand with love.

Tilly, youngest daughter, spoke of early morning trips to swim training, jumping in the car, turning on the radio and singing with him all the way. They hugged with love.

Rosemary, his mother, wept and watched with so much love.

At Ben's funeral a poem written by his wife Joni was read and it was especially poignant as Ben had suffered with Multiple Sclerosis for over 20 years, gradually losing control over his body.

I noticed:

You left ...

I noticed:

You left. You never wanted to. You would have stayed.

You made a perfect life, your life, from an imperfect place.

Shaping gratitude where others saw obstacles and difficulty.

I noticed:

You left the world changed. Not boldly or loudly but consistently and carefully.

You made others think and change when you asked - let me, why and what for.

I noticed:

You left a little chaos as you went. Not big or terrible chaos but the deep sigh and rolled eyes kind, only you could get away with.

The cheeky, slightly controversial sort that keeps them guessing.

I noticed:

You left us here. Right now in this place. So we can look back and be in your company again. So we can hear the music of your life and keep your thoughts and plans alive.

I noticed:

You left a gift to everyone you knew. One of fun, of peace, of fearlessness and of knowledge. You didn't expect anything in return. You only wanted to be remembered. And so you shall.

I noticed:

You left. Not because you wanted to, but it was time.

You left people better for knowing you, better for being with you.

You left a legacy, you were here with a purpose.

I noticed:

You left ...

The Ecstasy and the Laundry

On Monday, I had the long-overdue opportunity to spend a day with my friend and colleague, Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair. We talked about everything while we drove around town, shopped, and relaxed - and not surprisingly, we fell back into our habit of discussing deep questions of theology, governance, and worship.

Oscar's been reading Ana Levy-Lyons' book [The Secret Despair of the Secular Left](#), in which she comments on the disembodiment of much of liberal religion; that we are too much in our heads (fair) and that multi-platform/online worship may only be serving to further distance our spiritual lives from our bodies (also fair). Oscar noted that on an average week, about 60% of attendees watch the recording of worship instead of attending in person. And he asked me, an expert on worship, what we can do about it, or if embodiment - physically being together - matters.

We drilled down a bit, and we identified that the 60% fall into three categories: new visitors checking them out, the housebound and infirmed, and others - most of whom come in person sometimes, but less often since online worship became commonplace.

Now to be clear, Oscar isn't asking to end online worship - accessibility and outreach matter significantly. He's a bit worried about the leaders who might be so overwhelmed by their leadership roles that they avoid Sunday mornings in person. And he's a bit worried that we aren't doing enough to engage our whole selves in worship so that people would choose coming to the building over laundry.

And more, he's worried that for that 60%, they aren't getting a holistic experience of worship and faith formation.

Of course, I had some basic answers, which includes the thing I used to say when I lead multiplatform worship trainings in 2021: we cannot offer the same experience, but we can invite them into a parallel experience. We can

invite them to move their bodies, light candles, participate in rituals, sing along, repeat words, etc.

But of course, we can't make them.

And peer pressure - even the subtlest of pressure exerted by a group of people all doing the same things and not wanting to stick out - is a powerful tool. (I think about how many standing ovations I've reluctantly participated in at plays because I didn't want others to think I was a jerk - even if the performance didn't warrant it.)

And we know that worship is, at its core, a communal act. What happens in that hour is made not just by the people on the chancel but by the people engaging and participating. Even if the service is largely delivered (like a play or a concert or a stand-up set might be), the live congregation (or audience) matters. Heck, we all learned that during the lockdown phase of the pandemic - how many jokes did I tell? Hundreds. How many of them landed? I haven't a clue, because I was alone in a room talking to a computer screen. I adjusted my delivery and provided pauses, hoping there were at least giggles in various living room and kitchens (and probably laundry rooms too), but I'm not sure my body - or theirs - were in it, reacting and connecting.

I'll never forget my first service in person when we came back - it was at the UU Congregation in Southern Delaware, and while attendees and worship participants were all masked and distanced, they were living, breathing, flesh and blood people in front of me. And I cried. I felt their presence so deeply, so viscerally, it took my breath away. We worshiped in a way I hadn't experienced in well over a year. And it mattered. So what do we do? Do we assume that the people watching online are finding ways to embody worship and be present when their presence (and ours) can't be felt? Are they having a real experience, or are they spectators of an experience? Is there anything to be done? Do we have to do more engagement outside of worship

The Ecstasy and the Laundry – cont.

so they get some kind of experience of the sacred? What is missing in our liberal faiths if we're not experiencing the embodiment of the gathered?

I have no answers. I often don't, when Oscar asks me questions like this. But I can't get it out of my mind, knowing I was one of the biggest proponents of multiplatform worship and now wondering about the long-term effects of those choices.

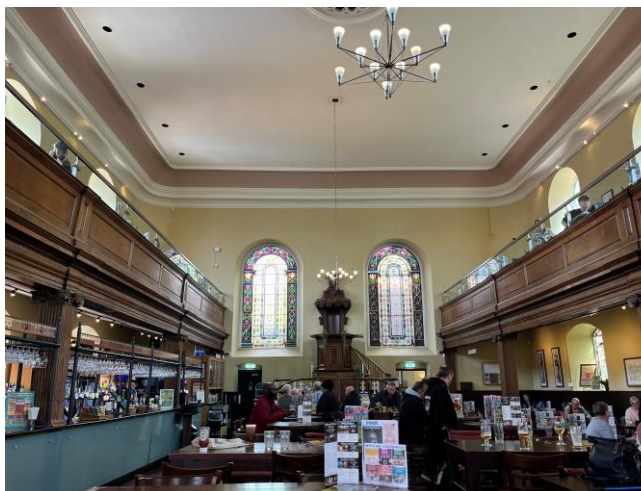
By Kimberley Debus

22nd April 2026

<https://hold-my-chalice.ghost.io/the-ecstasy-and-the-laundry/?ref=hold-my-chalice-newsletter>

Oscar visited us in Ipswich when he was spending a work placement in the UK. We remember his thoughtful services fondly.

Unitarian Meeting House in Exeter



On first glance this meeting house looks a little like our own with the wooden gallery and carved pulpit ... yet it is no longer a Unitarian Meeting House, but a pub full of character run by Wetherspoons! Jodi and John Warren took this photo on a trip to the city. Maybe this is a warning for us ...? Or just a different sort of congregating ...? Jodi said the welcome was warm and the building felt comfortable.



A joke sent in by Paula Chapman – thanks for the laugh!

Book Group meeting

We will be meeting online again on Thursday 2nd July at 19.00 to discuss 'Angel Down' by Daniel Kraus. All are welcome to join us – ask Tessa for the link.

UNITARIANS IN EAST ANGLIA

On Sunday 12th July the East Anglian Unitarian Women's Group invites all Unitarians in East Anglia to spend the afternoon at our Meeting House in Ipswich.

A service at 3pm will be followed by free time or a guided walk around the town.

The afternoon will conclude with time for conversation and a buffet tea in the Meeting House.

Please bring a food contribution for the buffet. Tea, coffee and cold drinks will be provided.



The date:

Sunday 12th July 2026

The time:

3pm

The place:

Unitarian Meeting House

Friars Street,

Ipswich IP1 1TD

Further details:

Sue Tombs

Suet.nutmeg@gmail.com

Lynne Davies

email: maglyn09@gmail.com

Linda King

email: lindapendal@gmail.com

Or- EAUWG

c/o Unitarian Meeting House, Friars Street,
Ipswich IP1 1TD

Birthdays in June

We wish everyone who has their birthday in June a sunny day for their special time, especially Molly Stevens on 1st; Suzanne Leary and Zoe Bradbrook on 2nd; June Shaw on 4th; Alison White on 6th; Ian Gray on 14th; Stephen Reed on 17th and Lucy Shaw on 22nd. Do let us know if you have a special celebration in the coming months.

Little poems

I've always loved children's books and when visiting Sutton Hoo on Friday headed for the second-hand book shop & children's bookshelves! I was immediately drawn to Cherry Moon as the illustrations by Junli Song were beautiful. The full title of the book is 'Cherry Moon - *Little poems Big Ideas Mindful of Nature*'. – says Linda King. Both poems were written by Zoro Weil.

Hum and Buzz

When the world is so yellow
the air so full of hum and buzz
I just close my eyes
and breathe in big
And then
one more time

If all clouds were earth

If all clouds were earth
and all earth were skies
and all skies were suns
and all suns were stars
and all stars were rivers
and all rivers were rocks
and all rocks were fish
and all fish were mountains
and all mountains were birds
and all birds were trees
and all trees were people
and all people were flowers
then if I picked one flower
I'd hold absolutely everything
In my hand

Mike Medhurst 1956 – 2026



On the 2nd May I attended a celebration of Mike's life at the Friends Meeting House in Ipswich. Some of you may remember Mike as he has led a service at our Meeting House and for several years was the Warden at the Quakers. I remember him also from discussions of our respective faiths & how they 'sit' in the world today.

The celebration was the usual Quaker form of worship, based on stillness and reflection. There were many there who spoke positively of Mike's connection with their faith and social action groups. The 'ministry' from his fellow Quaker and friend Andrew Stirling was particularly moving both personally and for his summary of discussions with Mike about faith. With Andrew's permission, I offer some of his words to our Unitarian community. 'Mike Medhurst's faith was, in summary; that you, me and life are OK – even though our experience seems to tell many of us it isn't, and we aren't. But then we live in a culture that tells us that life isn't and we aren't and to endlessly search for anything to make us seem, and feel, better.

Mike's faith and experience though was the entire opposite: it's about letting go, of releasing. To illustrate this he said it is like trying to float in a swimming pool while resting one foot on the bottom out of fear and insecurity. Indeed, those are the feelings that impel us to hold on - the ideas, beliefs, habits, hope, and material things but which just embed that insecurity. To paraphrase Jesus, these are what are impermanent in life - destructible, changeable and challengeable whereas faith is eternal and the same, always there within, a birthright, if only we knew. And if only we knew we would float anyway.

The secret, said Mike, seems both obvious when it is experienced but hard to see when it isn't - which is to drop attempts at outward control, which are always

Just, or wholly out of reach, when our real choice lies with and within us, in our response – to life, circumstances and others.

Because, Mike said, that which we feed is what grows in us: either the negatives of fear and therefore of judgement – within and between us- or the positives of openness, allowing acceptance – and love.

Faith then is not about beliefs, as is commonly assumed – be they apparently religious or apparently atheistic, or all stations in between. It's something else altogether. And this is the faith in which Mike lived and how he died – positively, in faith, entirely clear of despair, right to the end.

– Linda King

Windrush celebrations

The 2026 Windrush Festival celebration will return to the Cornhill on **Monday 22nd June 2026 from 12 noon – 4:30pm**. This is a one-day celebration of the Empire Windrush landing in Tilbury, Essex in 1948. It is a vibrant musical and culturally diverse event, free to attend for all the family! Come together to celebrate the achievements of the Caribbean community in Suffolk! There will be Caribbean food and Black business stalls, talks by Suffolk Windrush Committee Members, and live music. There will be an artistic exhibition and memorial refreshments, and a street food and market festival. The music stage is fully programmed to commemorate the heritage of the Caribbean passengers of the Windrush.

Thought for the month

Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see and wonder about what makes the universe exist. **Be curious**. And however difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at. It matters that you don't just give up.

— Stephen Hawking

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 Forsdike before the deadline of Friday 26th June ideally by email tessa@tessajordan.co.uk. To contact our Secretary, ring 07980 641620, email ipswichunitarian@gmail.com or ring our Treasurer Robert Waller on 01473 610723.