



Busy weekend!

Over the weekend of 12th and 13th September we held three events concurrently – the Ride and Stride for walkers and cyclists raising funds for the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust, the Heritage Open Days, welcoming visitors interested in the history of our building, and the Town Art Trail, featuring work from an eclectic range of artists. Over 600 visitors came and we were asked lots of questions about the building and Unitarianism.



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We would not have been able to do this without the support of all our volunteers so thank you – no names as there were luckily lots of you!

The Meeting House benefitted financially too as we were eligible for commission on all sales of the artwork. Thank you to the investors in the art too.



Louise Alexander sketched visitors, including our Minister in training, Lizzie Kingston Harrison. For more photos - [ipswich Town ART TRAIL 2026 by julianwarren@gmail.com](https://www.ipswicharttrail.co.uk/)

Later we offered two talks as part of the Heritage week – ‘Life’s Rich Tapestry’ by Liz Chester and ‘Architectural Oddities – Bootscrapers’ by Stuart Edgar. Both attracted more people into our building and we lost count of how many people over the weekend came in and shared variations of ‘I’ve lived in Ipswich all my life and have never been in here ... isn’t it wonderful!’ We hope they will come back!

We See Dragons ...



Many children visitors see our dragon before their parents, and I wonder how many people miss noticing him so high up ...?

The Raffle Prize

Our bank caused our treasurer Robert Waller a lot of hassle, even threatening to close our account. By way of an apology, they sent us a mystery hamper which we decided to raffle in aid of our charity, the Shelley Centre, raising £141. When we drew the ticket, Hottensiah had won – and she gave the prize to her husband Robert! Justice was seen to be done.



Grade 1 Challenges

The trustees and all who have been past trustees of our beautiful building are aware of the extra challenges of protecting the fabric of the Meeting House from the ravages of weather, age, leaves and ... pigeons! Each year we need to employ someone to clear the high gutters outside as they frequently become blocked with leaves from the beech trees around the building ... and from the pigeon nests which create a blockage stopping water from draining away. That is why earlier this year, we had the trees pollarded, in an effort to reduce the falling leaves this coming autumn ... however the pigeons still like to build their nests in our gutters. Here are the 'before' and 'after' photos of a recent challenge:



Before – filled with water



after - clear

Visitors – international rowers



We had a visit from international rowers Finn (Rosemary Hamilton's grandson) and Karolien Florijn (who has an Olympic gold medal from the Paris Olympic games in the single scull). They had just competed at the World Championships in Amsterdam and are now coastal rowing in a coxed four in Istanbul.

(the photo show l to r – Hilary Hamilton, Finn, Rosemary Hamilton and Karolien Florijn).

Constable to Contemporary



The third and final exhibition of Constable 250, in Christchurch Mansion, *Constable to Contemporary* will highlight the artistic and cultural relevancy of Constable's art through a variety of contemporary and community responses.

Running from 24 October to 28 February 2027, the exhibition will feature work from Suffolk Artlink's Brave Art Groups, Community Hub Ipswich as well as other Constable 250 community partners and participating schools.

Open Stage

This is a new drama group which combines drama warm-ups, exercises, body work and skills development with the structure and spiritual depth of a Unitarian engagement group, led by Ross McCrory with input from Lizzie Kingston Harrison.

Ross and Lizzie really enjoyed the two taster sessions they ran and hope those of you who came did too.

Ross is now able to offer a six-week course of drama workshops, with no particular outcome in mind but with a chance to practise the skills that drama offers us, in terms of physical presence, voice and body work. Hopefully this way of working will give you exercises you can continue using in everyday life. Lizzie will be there to 'hold the space', as they say, with opening and closing words, time for check-in and sharing and some time for quiet reflection.

Everything we do will always have a 'pass' option, if you want to sit quietly and just listen and watch that is absolutely fine. Everything we do will be grounded in a sense of safety, with good boundaries and respect for each other at the heart of the group. You can drop in or you can commit to all the sessions. Everything will be free with no charge at all. Tea and biscuits will be available, and we'll have plenty of time for optional discussion and sharing. As always in Unitarian gatherings, a wide range of opinions and experiences is accepted and encouraged!

The dates are as follows, always a Wednesday morning at 10am in the Unitarian Meeting House in Ipswich. Lizzie can offer lifts from Framlingham and Woodbridge if needed.

October 14th, 21st, 28th

November 4th, 11th, 18th.

Ipswich Bach Weekend



Ipswich BACH Weekend
A weekend of Baroque Music at the Ipswich Unitarian Meeting House

FRIDAY 16 OCTOBER - 7:00 PM
Bach I: From Solitude to Dance
Jorge Jiménez, Baroque violin

SATURDAY 17 OCTOBER - 8:00 PM
Bach After Dark:
An evening of Storytelling & Music
Joy Smith, Storytelling and harps

SUNDAY 18 OCTOBER - 1:00 PM
Bach II: Architecture & Light
Jorge Jiménez, Baroque violin

TICKET INFORMATION
Individual concerts
£15 · (£12 for Friends of the UMH)
Weekend Pass: All three events
£35 · £30 (for Friends of the UMH)

SCAN ME!

Or visit: www.jorge-jimenez.es/tickets
INFO & Telephone bookings: 07580441394

Ipswich Unitarian Meeting House
Friars St, Ipswich IP1 1TD

Jorge says -

I'm very excited to announce the **Ipswich Bach Weekend**, which will be taking place at the 1699 Unitarian Meeting House in Ipswich the weekend of **16–18 October**.

I'll be performing **all six of Bach's Sonatas & Partitas for solo violin**, spread across two concerts, with a rather different evening in between.

Friday 16 October - 19:00

Bach I — From Solitude to Dance

The first half of the complete cycle of Bach's Sonatas and Partitas

Saturday 17 October - 20:00

Bach After Dark — Stories, Music & Scandal from the Baroque – 18+

Joy Smith will bring us a unique evening of music and storytelling — with extraordinary characters, rivalries, scandals and stranger stories...

Sunday 18 October - 13:00

Bach II — Architecture & Light

The second half of the cycle, bringing the weekend to a close with the magnificent E-major Partita.

I'm particularly looking forward to doing the six works in this way. Heard across a single weekend, the Sonatas & Partitas become something of a journey — and the Saturday evening gives us a chance to step away from the formal recital and into a unique night of stories and fantasy.

Individual events: £15 (£12 Friends of the Unitarian Meeting House)

Weekend Pass: £35 (£30 Friends)

 **Unitarian Meeting House, Ipswich**

 <https://www.jorge-jimenez.es/tickets>

RIVER OF TIME - A SONG SUITE FOR CENTENARY 2028!

2028 marks both the centenary of our General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, and the centenary of the opening of Cambridge Unitarians' church. It seems likely that 2028-9 will see a range of celebrations.

INVITATION TO CONGREGATIONS AND MEMBERS

My plan is to collaborate with potential writers and singers, between Autumn 2026 and 2028. The suite of songs I hope to complete is for East Anglian congregations and for the wider UK Unitarian movement. An outcome for us may be a local or district-wide gathering to sing newly written songs. *River of Time* would comprise simple choral pieces along with familiar hymns for audience participation. Pieces of writing sent to me, but which are difficult to set to music, could become readings. The Suite may become as long as the proverbial piece of string, so scratch choirs can learn their own choice of pieces, as they will vary in difficulty.

INVITATION TO SING

An ideal outcome is to form a single choir: UNITARIAN VOICES ANGLIA. However, no effort to gather and sing is ever a waste - and whatever you believe, everyone has a voice!

RIVER OF TIME – cont.

INVITATION TO WRITE – PROMPTS!

Naturally, the following hints are metaphors for the fluidity of our Unitarian history, and for changes we experience as human beings in a changing world. This is different from descriptive poetry and prose, however lovely.

A river has a source, and an end point in the sea. It can become narrow, fast and deep, or it may become broad and slow, swallowing up other streams and sources. It can be sluggish, can seem almost to dry up, then is refreshed. It can be peaceful, glinting with light - a source of wonder; or it might fall as a cataract, prompting awe. Water can run clear or become turbid after the turmoil of rain. A stream may run underground, become lost, forgotten. Heading relentlessly downstream, eventually, water meets the sea.

And so, my invitation goes something like this: Each of us is a writer in that we ponder, reflect, react, speak of our dreams and of our sorrows - whether or not we write them down. So, each of us is potentially a writer of colourful thoughts. Over the coming weeks, please consider what you might write as a basis for singing in your local community, or at our Annual Meetings. I look forward to hearing from you, on ringofvoices@gmail.com
Marianna Michell

Services in October

4th - Helen Simpson, Octagon Unitarian Chapel, Norwich.

11th - Lynne Davies, Octagon Unitarian Chapel, Norwich.

18th - Lizzie Kingston Harrison, Minister in Training, Ipswich.

25th - Lizzie Kingston Harrison, Minister in Training, Ipswich

All services start at 10.45, and you are welcome to join us for any or all of them.



Christmas Fayre and Santa's Grotto – advance notice!

Harvest Shared Lunch



As is our tradition we decorated the Meeting House for the harvest service and brought food and items to take to the Women's Refuge.

Then we shared lunch together. As usual there was plenty to eat!

Book Festival

There are 55 events throughout Ipswich on the weekend of 2nd to 4th October at 11 venues, including (maybe the most popular) Caroline Quentin at our Meeting House on Saturday 3rd at 3pm. For tickets, book through the website - <https://www.ipswichbookfestival.co.uk/>

Birthdays in October

We wish everyone who is celebrating their birthday this month a very special day, especially Maggie Hodges and Claire Johnston on 17th; Isaac Shaikh on 18th; Sandra Hawes, Louis Hawes and Edmund Bradbrook on 25th; Andrew Gibbs on 27th and Jodi Warren on 28th.

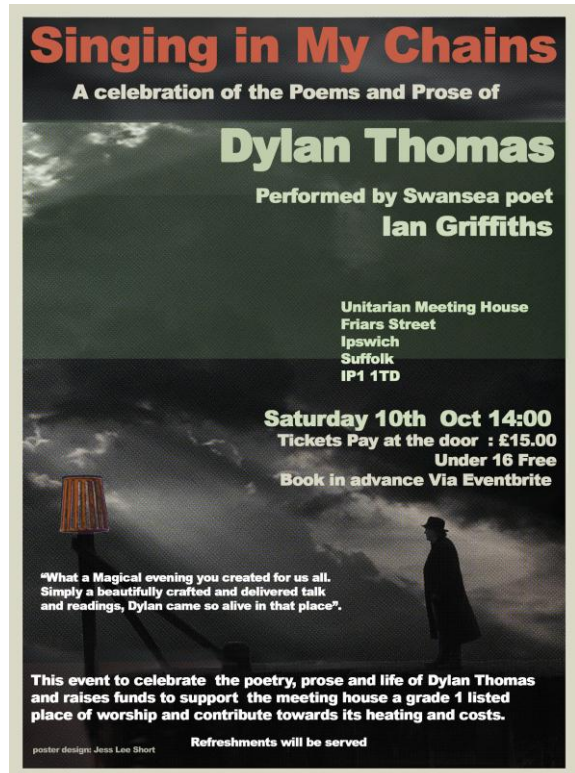
Climate Awareness

We will be hosting a showing of the People's Emergency Briefing film on Saturday 3rd October at 6pm – free admission and all welcome. The film is introduced (in the film) by Chris Packham and afterwards there will be a chance to chat, ask questions and discuss what we have seen. Hopefully this will then lead to action ...

<https://seedsofhopeandaction.wixsite.com/website>

Singing in My Chains

Ian Griffiths will be presenting and performing Dylan Thomas' poetry in the Meeting House on Saturday 10th October at 2pm –



Spooky Stories

Our (now) traditional Halloween event when Adam Whybray reads spooky tales in a decorated Meeting House will this year take place on Saturday 31st October at 7pm. All proceeds in aid of our charity The Shelley Centre who support riding for the disabled.

Book Group

Our next meeting is on Thursday 1st October at 7pm when we will be discussing '*Instructions for a Heatwave*' by Maggie O'Farrell. Though set in 1976, this is timely for this year's heatwave too!

Thought for the month

There is a reading in our hymnal by Edward Everett Hale:

I am only one
But still I am one.
I cannot do everything,
But still I can do something.
And because I cannot do everything
I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.
(#457 in *Singing the Living Tradition*)

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 Monday 26th October ideally by email to tessa@tessajordan.co.uk. To contact our Secretary, ring 07980 641620, email ipswichunitarian@gmail.com or ring our Treasurer Robert Waller on 01473 610723.