



Great Meeting Chapel Leicester

Newsletter for
September and October 2011



"Come ye thankful people come"

300 years of Freedom, Reason and Tolerance

Great Meeting Chapel Newsletter for September and October 2011

SERVICES IN SEPTEMBER

Sunday	4 th	11am	Supply Preacher Kevin Stone
Sunday	11 th	11am	The Minister
Sunday	18 th	3pm	The Minister
Sunday	25 th	11am	<u>Harvest Festival</u> The Minister

SERVICES IN OCTOBER

Sunday	2 nd	11am	The Minister
Sunday	9 th	11am	The Minister
Sunday	16 th	3pm	Supply Preacher Rev.Sue Woolley
Sunday	23 rd	11am	The Minister
Sunday	30 th	11am	The Minister

Items for inclusion in the Winter edition of the newsletter should be handed in by 16th October if possible, please.

DIARY FOR SEPTEMBER

- Saturday 3rd** **2.30pm** East Midland Unitarians District Quarterly Meeting at Boston.
- Saturday 10th** **10am** Heritage Open Day and Leicestershire Historic Churches Bike Ride
Coffee Shop open 10.30am - 4pm today!
- Sunday 18th** **3pm** Baptism of Amy Lucy Cadoux
- Sunday 25th** **12.30pm** Harvest Lunch following the morning service.

DIARY FOR OCTOBER

- Saturday 8th** **12.30pm** East Midland Unitarians AGM
at Derby
- Thursday 13th** **6pm** Reception and Book Launch
in Chapel and the Garden Room

Further dates and times of the Vestry and Making Things Happen Group meetings will be announced from the pulpit.

**The Coffee Shop is open every
Saturday morning 10.30am-12.30pm.**

From the Minister.....

Dear Friends,

In late July I visited an exhibition at the Nottingham Contemporary Gallery, which is situated on the corner of High Pavement, next door to what used to be the Unitarian Chapel, whose spire still dominates the Nottingham skyline.

The exhibition was devoted in the main to the works of the French author Jean Genet, but I was drawn there to see the exhibits by his friend Alberto Giacometti. The review stated that this was the largest assembly of Giacometti's work in this country for decades, so not an opportunity to be missed.



Man Pointing



Walking Man

His very famous sculptures The Pointing Man and Man Walking, were on display alongside other works but it was principally these two items which drew all the attention. Both pieces are as tall as I am, and the attenuated figures in bronze, so thin and spare, and yet so descriptive of our pared-down human condition, seemed to me to be perfectly evocative of both our strength and vulnerability, our sense of purpose and our fine intelligence.

It was only later, speaking to our caretaker Steve at Chapel, that I learned that as part of his job with the galleries he had actually constructed the platforms upon which the Giacometti pieces were displayed. Steve asked me to guess how much the sculptures are valued at? £100 million!

I thought of Giacometti in the 1940's and 50's, his dark jacketed figure, his wiry hair, his deeply lined face, a cigarette between his fingers, a world away from the pristine lines of the Nottingham Contemporary, and yet still speaking so clearly and so meaningfully to us across more than half a century.

£100 million I thought. Yes, that would be about right.

With all good wishes to members and friends.

Arthur.



Alberto Giacometti (1901 – 1966)
was a Swiss sculptor, painter, draughtsman,
and printmaker.

One Enchanted Evening.....

On Friday 24th June our member David Kent entertained us with a wonderful evening of musical cabaret. The concert, held in the chapel, was organised and promoted by David to raise money for our 'Piano Appeal' (to provide a custom made trolley which will support and enable movement of our grand piano).

The evening is perfectly summed up below -

[Leicester Mercury Review, Sunday 26th June.](#)
[by Qyan Arnachellum.](#)

Singer shows infectious zest

David Kent's journey to the West End stage led him to the London School of Musical Theatre to roles in various shows.

This one-man cabaret show with David Hubery accompanying on the piano, was eagerly awaited.

Stuffiness and rigid formality were definitely not in order as David's informal, humorous, expressive and enthusiastic personality shone through, displaying an infectious zest for his craft engaging the audience throughout.

Welcome to My World, his own lively composition, began the show and set the scene for the evening.

Favourites such as If I were a rich Man, from Fiddler on the Roof, Love Changes Everything from Aspects of Love, Bring Him Home from Les Miserables and Novello's Rhythm of Life, plus many more, were sung.

Songs I had never heard before captivated my imagination, too, such as A Man Could Go Quite Mad, the delightful Masochism Tango and

another two of David's creations *Is This My Crime* and *Delicia* about Patricia the Stripper!

If a performance in all its facets, technical and otherwise, can gain the listener's complete attention in full throughout, then it must be judged a big success.

That was the case tonight, the brilliant musicality of the pianist and the support of the Leicestershire Rainbow Voices Choir during the last song *Any Dream Will Do* contributing hugely to making it just so.

It truly was an Enchanting Evening

Our sincere thanks to David for giving so much of his time and energies. The evening raised £609 with wine and nibbles during the interval provided from coffee shop funds. A terrific result.

David is currently appearing at the Edinburgh Festival in his live show 'Uglies do Edinburgh'.

For more information visit David's website-
<http://misterdavidkent.com>



Indian Bean trees at GM.....

The **Indian Bean trees** at the St Peter's Lane end of the chapel garden are particularly impressive this year with large numbers of bean-like pods. The following article was included in the newsletter in 2009, Apologies to those of you who are familiar with it but it may be of interest to new members and visitors alike.

More on Great meeting Chapel's trees....

The Chapel entrance off St. Peter's Lane is dominated by two unusual trees, namely of the Indian Bean Tree (***Catalpa bignonioides* Walt.**). These flank each side of the gate and look quite exotic, with their huge, pale yellow-green leaves and dangling bean-like pods. Naturally, they are neither Indian nor beans. This tree belongs to the family Bignoniaceae, a tropical family of some 800 species, most of which are climbers, vines and lianas; the types that Tarzan used to swing on. They are native to the U.S.A., specifically the subtropical Caribbean coastal belt from West Florida, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi. Curiously, despite being subtropical they are frost hardy and survive well in gardens in Southern England, though here their growing season is a mere 4 months, from late-June to late September. They were discovered by an Englishman, Mark Catesby (1682-1749), a naturalist of independent means. William Sherard recommended him to the Royal Society which sent him on a natural history exploration of the Carolinas from 1722-1726. Seeds of Bean Tree were sent by him to Sherard at Oxford, and Sir Hans Sloane of London. The first record of their being planted in our grander gardens was 1726. Catesby found them in Carolina '..... in remoter parts of the country'. The Carolinas of the early 1700's were unknown and dangerous territory, with numerous inter-indian wars taking place, so it's remarkable that an amateur naturalist bird-watcher



from Essex should survive there. Another English explorer, John Lawson, was killed there shortly before. 'Catalpa' was mis-transcribed from the native American name 'Catawba' of the Muscogee and Creek Indians, referred-to as Seminoles by the Spanish. The Catawba tribe still lives on a reservation at Leslie, South Carolina.

The curious 'bean' pods , about 1 foot long, in dangling clusters, contain small, inedible seeds that germinate to give strange leaves that are 2-lobed, like Peony. The flowers are spectacular, 2 inches across and resembling Foxgloves. Many books remark on the smell of the crushed leaves, being 'bad' or 'foul-smelling'. I'll be more forthcoming, they smell of tomcats.

Indian Bean trees are short-lived, usually less than 100 years and naturally develop a pronounced lean as they age. Our trees are true to type, and are leaning well over the road as they reach towards the sun before it disappears round the *Cherry Tree* corner. The oldest specimens in the world are not in the U.S.A. but reside in The Minster Churchyard of St. Mary's Butts, Reading and are 150 years old. Their survival is causing some concern and they have been heavily pruned to prolong their age. But pruning ensures that the leaves are particularly large, and they will survive regular pollarding. Our trees have just suffered their first serious pruning but seem to be doing well in our frost-free niche and should have many years ahead of them. They can't easily be aged but I would put them as 50-60 years old. Who could have sought-out and planted such interesting exotics in our Chapel garden?



*Catalpa flower
photographed at Great
Meeting
by Tony Fletcher*

Our thanks to **Tony Fletcher** for the above article taken from Great Meeting Newsletter September 2009.

Harvest Festival and Lunch.....

Harvest festival this year will be on **Sunday 25th September** at **11 o'clock** followed by the usual Sale of Produce and our Harvest Lunch.

As in previous years all contributions of produce and donations towards our Harvest Charity will be warmly welcomed. This year we will be supporting the **Red Cross East Africa Food Crisis Appeal**.

The proposed lunch menu is -

Cold Meats and Cheese with Jacket Potatoes
Salads, Pickles and Chutney
Homemade Fruit Crumble
with Cream or Custard

- all at a cost of **£5 per person**, payable on the day. After deduction of basic costs any profit will be donated to our Harvest Charity. If you wish to bring a contribution food towards the lunch it will be much appreciated. (Sign-up sheet in the garden Room).

The decoration of the chapel will take place on **Friday 23th September** at **2pm**.

Please come along and join us for what promises to be a heart-warming occasion.



Harvest Lunch 2010

A Reflection on Harvest

The chill in the air of mists and rain,
the grey and blue of sky, meeting the reds and golds of leaves
announce that autumn has arrived -
a feast for the senses.

The fruit-laden branches of trees, and the berry festooned bushes,
the bare fields now reaped of grain and vegetable,
announce that harvest has arrived -
a feast for the body.

But what of a feast for the soul?
What have we gathered from our lives?
What of the harvest experience?....

In this season of ingathering and feasting,
let us remember the harvest for the senses,
the harvest for the body,
and the harvest for the soul:
lessons learned, peace sensed and love felt....

Spirit of All Creation,
we give thanks for the bounty of our harvest of senses, body and soul.
Guide us to use our blessings to bring a brighter harvest for all beings;
and grant us the wisdom to be alive to the harvest of peace and love.

from Simon John Barlow

Book Launch Party.....

Invitation to Women, Dissent and Anti-Slavery Launch Party 13 October 2011



Dr Elizabeth Clapp

Members and Friends of Great Meeting are invited to join the editors in celebrating the publication by Oxford University Press of *Women, Dissent, and Anti-Slavery in Britain and America, 1790-1865* edited by Elizabeth J. Clapp and Julie Roy Jeffrey,

on Thursday 13 October 2011,
6.00-7.30 pm,
at Great Meeting Chapel,
East Bond Street,
Leicester.

If you are planning to join us please sign the sheet in the Garden Room or email your reply by 9 October to -

conference@dwlib.co.uk.

WEA at Great Meeting.....

Autumn term classes starting week commencing
19th September 2011.

What the Dickens?

10 meetings Monday 1.30-3.30pm
Tutor: John Florence

Secrets of Stonehenge

10 meetings Wednesday 1.30-3.30pm
Tutor: Stephanie Vann

High Street history

10 meetings Thursday 10.30-12.pm
Tutor: Cynthia Brown

Early transport through the Leicestershire coalfield

10 meetings Thursday 2pm-3.30pm
Tutor: Bob Payne

**For information about these and other WEA courses, please contact
WEA Office, Vaughan College, St Nicholas Circle, Leicester, LE1 4LB.**

Telephone 0116 2519740, email amiles@wea.org.uk

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G M NEWS

Zen Farewell.....

On Thursday 4th August we held our monthly Great Heart Circle in the Garden Room .

We made it a special leaving circle for Kirsty (centre bottom row in photo), who will be moving soon to work in Germany. People were invited to bring flowers for her, and we gave them to her in a little ceremony and then sang together.

Once again an amazing feast was had at the end - fresh bread, homemade chocolate cake, couscous, peaches, nectarines, strawberries, olives, juice and Italian family wine!

Chris Starbuck



Kirsty will be greatly missed at the Yoga group and Coffee Shop too, especially by the Victoria Sponge!

Annie

Anniversary.....

Annie and Arthur would like to warmly thank all the members of the congregation who so kindly contributed to our sensational bouquet of flowers, and for signing the lovely card on the occasion of our Silver Wedding Anniversary.



*Pictured here outside Oat Street
Unitarian Chapel Evesham
12th August 1986*

Chapel Fabric.....

Work continues to keep the chapel fabric in order. The chancel and Garden Room roofs have been repaired and the lead replaced following its theft some weeks ago.

Repairs are currently underway to the cornice below the chapel roof; and our sincere thanks to **John Woodward** for resetting the loose and missing cobbles in the paths surrounding chapel.

Our thanks as always to **Steve Lynch** our caretaker for his continuing work keeping things in order. He has fitted additional cupboards in the kitchen and will shortly be fitting a new sink and tap.

News.....

An updated list of proposed activities for your diary.....

Saturday 10th September - Heritage Open Day and Leicester Historic Churches Open Bike Ride
Chapel open from 10am to 5pm

Sunday 25th September - Harvest Festival, Lunch and Sale of Produce following the morning service.

Autumn (date to be announced) - **Visit to Dr Williams's Library, London.** Hosted by Dr David Wykes.

October (date to be announced) - **Leicester Rainbow Voices Concert** in Chapel.

November (date to be announced) - **Congregational Lunch at the White Swan, Sileby.**

Sunday 18th December - Carol Service and Christmas Tea

All members, family, visitors and friends welcome

Chapel Flowers.....Volunteers needed.....

If you wish to donate and/or arrange flowers in Chapel, in memoriam, to mark a special anniversary, or to simply to take a turn, please sign-up on the Flower Rota sheet in the Garden Room.

Many thanks

News.....

Chapel Website.....

Work continues on the Chapel website. A new page has been added specifically to advertise activities, clubs and societies currently using our rooms at Great Meeting.

If you have copies of photographs, particularly of past members and chapel events, or simply photographs of the buildings or grounds, Annie Stewart would be very pleased to scan them for inclusion on the website. The intention is to use the photo album page as an archive of photographs both past and present relating to Great Meeting

Please contact Annie Tel.01509 812236 or

Email: anniestew@hotmail.co.uk

Visit the website: www.leicesterunitarians.co.uk

Coffee Shop Rota.....

If you are free one Saturday to help with the Saturday Coffee Shop, please add your name to the sign-up sheet in the Garden Room or email Diane fossilmatron@msn.com with your chosen date.

Great Meeting is a 'hotspot'.....

For a modest outlay from coffee shop funds Great Meeting now has Wi-Fi access to the internet. Connection is free to all chapel members and coffee shop customers alike, a current password is available for users in the Garden Room.

AND FINALLY.....

Betjeman, A Biography by A.N.Wilson

The son of a successful furniture manufacturer who fell out irredeemably with his father because he did not wish to carry on the family business; a “son of trade” who aspired to mix with the upper classes; a student at Oxford, who did so little work, his tutor would not even let him enter for his final examinations; a married man for all his adult life, but with a mistress who was Lady in Waiting to Princess Margaret; a father himself who irredeemably alienated his own son; this quintessentially English man who had a German sounding name was from the start, as A.N. Wilson shows, a mass of apparent contradictions. His poetic style is accessible and immediately understandable, hence it’s popularity. But because it lacks the difficulty of a T.S. Elliot or W.H. Auden, it has been easy to dismiss it as facile and empty. Behind those lucid and lyrical couplets lie ideas of the greatest human profundity and, like Larkin, a recognition of the true power of love in our lives.



*Sir John Betjeman
1906 - 1984*

Unlike Larkin, however, John Betjeman was an almost life-long attender of the Church of England. He loved it in every respect, from its prayer book to its architecture, from its ritual to its smells and bells. A.N. Wilson believes it would be fair to say that Betjeman experienced Jesus Christ in the sacrament of the Holy Communion, experienced in his early days at Highgate, then at Oxford, and subsequently at the other places where he lived and worshipped. One of his favourite places of worship was Grovener Chapel in London. He attended with his companion Elizabeth Cavendish and sometimes accompanied by Princess Margaret, and he is described there as follows: During the service Betjeman sat with a slightly goofy frog-like expression on his face during the sermon, leaning forward and appearing to hang on every word the preacher spoke. He wrote: “The church is so full of

beauty that my heart missed a beat”, and in one of his poems we hear him wishing that “the whole world was C of E”. And we do not really have to look much further than his well known poems on Harvest Festival and Christmas to see examples of his obvious love of church, and there are many other examples too, which could illustrate his devotion to Anglican religion.

It must however be said that the intensity of this religious devotion did not in any way prevent Betjeman from the inappropriate nature of some of his relationships, his affairs and his infatuations, his guilt, his depressions and his anguish. The two sides of his experience seem to have sat together, the agony and the ecstasy, like sunlight on the edges of storm clouds.

For anyone wishing to get a real flavour of this contradictory and self-perplexing author, who epitomises possibly more than any other modern writer that Englishness some of us still feel nostalgia for, I can heartily recommend this enjoyable and accessible biography.

Arthur

If you would like to share a review of a book, film or play, please send it to Annie for inclusion in the next edition of the newsletter.

Great Meeting Coffee Shop

**Every Saturday
Morning**

10.30am-12.30pm

Take respite from the hustle and bustle of the shops. Come and join us for a chat or a quiet read of the newspaper.

Fairtrade ground coffee, tea, soft drinks, cake and biscuits on sale.

**Homemade preserves for sale
and
Second-hand book stall.**

Wi-Fi Hotspot!

G M on the Map.....

Following a recent reorganisation of the road network in the vicinity of Chapel, the most direct route remains - from Vaughan Way, via Church Gate, St Peter's Lane and East Bond Street. When leaving Chapel - via St Peter's Lane, Mansfield Street and Abbey Street onto Vaughan Way. See Map below.

Leicester City Centre showing Great Meeting Chapel



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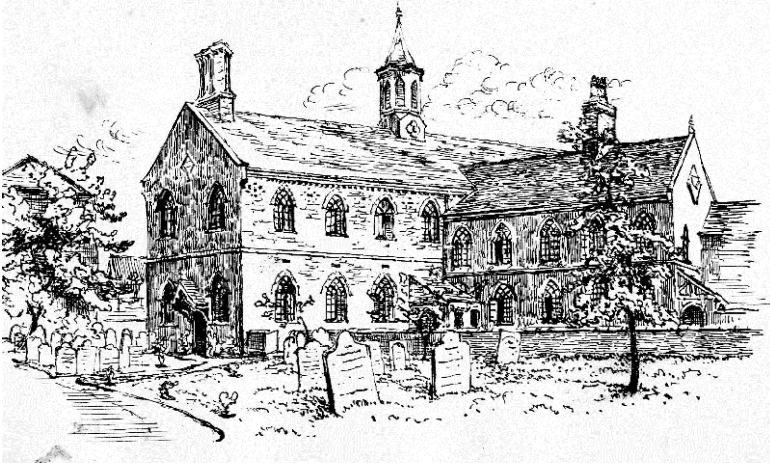
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**The Old Schoolrooms (now Charles Berry House)
built 1859**

Great Meeting Unitarian Chapel

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