



## *The Frambridge Chronicle*

**News from the Minister & Congregation of the Unitarian Meeting House,  
Bridge Street, Framlingham**



Dear Friends

Reflecting on how much importance we should attach to attending Sunday Services at our Meeting Houses poses a tricky question! Attendance at Catholic worship has apparently held up better than at most main stream Protestant Services. This may be of course due to one of the tenets of the Catholic faith being that every Sunday should be considered as a day of "holy obligation", an expectation of attending Mass every week.

In contrast, our Unitarian tradition has been and is that we neither proselytise nor pressurize people to attend services: it is a matter of personal choice. Highly valid reasons for not coming to the Meeting House on a Sunday may include being unwell or upholding commitments to spend time with family who are deserving of all the love that can be given. If we feel like going for a walk in the woods on a Sunday then the chances are we should do so. Frankly, we rightly value our individual freedoms.

The American Unitarian poet, essayist and Transcendentalist, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 -1882), proposed that a person was just as likely to come in touch with the divine by communing with nature as by listening to a Unitarian sermon. However, Emerson also said this:

**A person will worship something, have no doubt about that. We may think our tribute is paid in secret in the dark recesses of our hearts, but it will come out. That which dominates our imagination and our thoughts will determine our lives and our character. Therefore it behooves us to be careful what we worship, for what we are worshipping, we are becoming.**

As a Minister I feel that congregating regularly is "essential" - because it challenges us to ask ourselves, 'What it is we are worshipping or centering our thoughts on?' 'Can this time be used to re-orient ourselves so that our worship/meditation is worthily focused? Are we aware of the thoughts and needs of others and of wider community and world issues?' The discipline of regularly coming together can strengthen our resolve to grow, share with and support one another in following our Unitarian traditions, which value involvement in endeavour to promote and establish social justice, mutual understanding and to make more visible the standards we try to uphold through practicing our Unitarian faith in the local community and further afield.

A wry witticism comes to mind. An Irishman, finding himself in one sticky situation after another, when asked to describe his predicament, says "Well, it's desperate but not serious". This reply can be taken to resonate with the Sunday low attendances at our Meeting Houses. Congregations may be small which in itself is not "serious". However, the work of the minister and maintaining facilities together with contributions to the community at large, are the same whether there are 5 or 50 members attending. The burden so often falls on the core of the few who if "overloaded" can at times find themselves feeling "desperate". Sufficient members to share Services and to work alongside each other is an 'essential' for a valid faith community.

If we find ourselves without a good reason **not** to attend, we should come to the Meeting House on a Sunday. Remember.... for Unitarians attending Sunday services will never be compulsory.... only (sometimes) essential.

Blessings,

*Rev Matthew*

**Please Note:** The Minister is **not available** on **Thursdays** or **Fridays** except in case of a pastoral emergency

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Services in October 2015			
Date	Time	The Unitarian Meeting House Bridge Street Framlingham, IP13 9AJ	The Unitarian Meeting House Churchgate St., Bury St Edmunds IP33 1RH
4 Oct	3 p.m.		<b>The Wisdom of Diversity</b>
11 Oct	4 p.m.	<b>A Late Harvest and the Creative Mind</b> <i>A small display of fresh produce would be much appreciated</i>	
18 Oct	11 a.m.		<b>Radically Moderate or Moderately Radical: Are you one or neither?</b>
25 Oct	4 p.m.	<b>The Good Life of (John) Goodwyn Barmby – Suffolk Revolutionary (1821-1881)</b>	
October Services at Framlingham and Bury St Edmunds Meeting Houses share a broad theme; <b>'Diversity, Creativity and Radicalism'</b> intended to help us explore our living Unitarian tradition more fully.			

**Activities in the Meeting House unless otherwise stated:**

- **Café Connect every Tuesday 10 – 12 noon** all welcome, Fair Trade refreshments and conversation.
- **MINDFULNESS** an 8 week course (Mondays 7 - 9 p.m.) 21 September - 9 November. Please contact **Barbara Winfield 01728 720029** if you are interested in a meditation community in Framlingham.
- **7 October 10.30 a.m.** The Framlingham Unitarian Trustees meet.
- **Saturday 10 October from 10 a.m. FRAMLINGHAM SAUSAGEFEST** – takes place in the Town including activities at the Meeting House.
- **FRAMLINGHAM COUNTRY MARKET** every SATURDAY 0900 – 1130
- **Saturday 17 October, 7.30 p.m.** The Choir, "SCUNSALATA", will give another of their popular concerts. **Tickets £7 at the door**, proceeds to aid the medical charity **Medecins Sans Frontieres**
- **Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October 10.30 a.m.** The first meeting of a new **Bereavement Support Group** run by the Co-Op to be held on the **first and third Wednesdays of the month**. Details **Rebecca Louis 01473 231460**
- **Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October 10.30 a.m.** The **Congregational Committee** meets at 3 Victoria Mill Road
- **Coming up Saturday 7 November 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. AGEING POSITIVELY-** taster sessions/short talks by alternative health professionals

From the Editor: **On Saturday 12 September** there were 100's of visitors to our beautiful building when the **Open Heritage Day Tours/AboutFram** used the Meeting House as their HQ in combination with the **Ride and Stride** event in aid of the **Suffolk Historic Churches Trust**. Throughout the day Janice & Martin Croucher recorded **70** sponsored cyclists and walkers whilst a continuous stream of visitors came to see the artwork display "*Why we love Fram*" by pupils of Sir Robert Hitcham Primary School. Kathy and Sarah of **AboutFram** facilitated the bookings for the *Open Heritage Tours* around historic /significant buildings in Framlingham assembling yet more people to appreciate & enjoy the interior of our Grade 11 listed building before they set off. On the Meeting House Forecourt, Dairy Maid Vivian Bamford (in period dress) of **Sciapod Dairy** demonstrated the ancient art of Butter and Cheese Making aided by keen youngsters from the audience, who were amazed by the amount of "hands on" very messy tough physical work that had to be done every day to produce these basic foods. [Our own Martin C nobly did the washing up!] In between whiles, more Forecourt Feats from Greg Chapman of "**Condensed Histories**" drew crowds with his historical and often hysterical antics; juggling with sabres (whilst balancing on a roller); knife throwing (blindfold) & one-man reconstructions of the Great Escape from Colditz (WW2) and a noisy re-enactment of the Battle of Agincourt in 15 minutes with enthusiastic 'English' v 'French' audience participation! A monocycle 'charger', water bombs for 'arrows': a very happy day.

**Deadline for the November edition of The Frambridge Chronicle is Monday 13 November**