



The Frambridge Chronicle

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

Dear Friends,

By now hopefully everybody connected with Framlingham Unitarian Meeting House knows that our programme of events to celebrate the **Tercentenary** of the building of the Meeting House in 1717 takes place during the weekend of **13-14 May 2017**.

Saturday and Sunday are free events. Not quite a "free for all". Nobody will be turned away but since there is a Tea on the Sunday we do need to have the roughest of rough estimates of numbers. Consequently, those coming are kindly asked to let me know which days you will be attending (hopefully both). Many of you have already done so. Cllr Lesley Clouting will be joining us on the Saturday evening on behalf of Framlingham Town Council.

The main message is "Please come and support the event '**1717 and All That**' at 7pm on the evening of **Saturday 13 May** and come also to the events on **Sunday 14 May** beginning with **Tea at 2.15 p.m.**, followed at **3 p.m.** by a concert of baroque music provided by **Zephyr Baroque**, concluding with our **Anniversary Service at 4 p.m.** led by our friend, former GA President **Marion Baker**.

Framlingham Meeting House are now the proud owners of an upright piano. Thanks are especially due to Persephone Booth for finding one for us. This will have its debut at the Saturday evening event but I am hoping by having the piano as an alternative instrument to the Organ it will help to provide a more flexible focus for future music events.

Saturday 13 May at 7 p.m. '**1717 and All That**' is an evening of historical reflection on the history of the Meeting House and some of the characters that have graced its doors – with some good music making. Retired minister **Rev. Cliff Reed** is our main speaker. Local tenor **Adrian Cave** will be the principal provider of entertainment with a range of music from opera, lieder and shows, accompanied by **James Recknell** at the piano.

My greatest wishes for this weekend are, first, that people enjoy themselves and, second, if they come away with an understanding that we are a thriving Meeting House community living out Unitarian values which will continue to be a blessing in the future as much as in the past and present, then I shall be doubly delighted.

I would like to extend my thanks to all those who are contributing in any way towards making this Tercentenary a success.

Blessings,

Matthew

Rev. Matthew Smith

Please note that the **Minister's Rest Days** are **Thursday and Friday** except in the case of a pastoral emergency

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Services during May 2017			
Date	Time	The Unitarian Meeting House Bridge St Framlingham, IPI 3 9AJ	The Unitarian Meeting House Churchgate St, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1RH
7 May	3 p.m.	A TRUE FRIEND IS SOMEONE WHO SEES THE PAIN IN YOUR EYES WHILE EVERYONE ELSE BELIEVES YOUR SMILE.	What is Friendship?
14 May	4 p.m.	Tercentenary Service <i>Led by Mrs. Marion Baker</i> Former General Assembly President <i>Member of the national General Assembly Executive Committee</i>	 1717 2017
21 May	11 a.m.		Thoughts on Pain
28 May	4 p.m.	Exploring Mindfulness <i>A service with Barbara Winfield</i>	

Events in the Meeting House (unless otherwise stated) during **May**

- **every TUESDAY 10.30 – 12.30 CAFE CONNECT** All welcome to come along, relax, meet old friends and make new ones, join in the conversations. *Fair Trade* refreshments @ reasonable prices, plus some bakery goods, for sale. Café Connect supports **FAYAP** (Framlingham Area Youth Action Partnership) who operate from The FAYAP Youth & Arts Centre on the Thomas Mills High School site.
- **every Thursday** In term time, 3 – 4 p.m. “**Drama for Youngsters**” with Fiona McAlpine

Monday 1 May, 7 p.m. The **Mindfulness Group** is due to meet. As this and the session on **29 May** both fall on a **Bank Holiday** please confirm these meetings by contacting **Barbara Winfield 01728 720029**. Barbara would also be pleased to hear from anyone interested in attending Mindfulness classes for the first time – is happy to discuss Mindfulness and answer any questions.

Saturday 6 May 9.30 – 1 p.m. **Greener Fram ‘Free Recycle, Swap & Mend’**; Bring along anything you don’t need to swap for something you can use. Nothing to bring? Come anyway and help yourself, you may be surprised by what you find. The collecting tin is there if you wish to contribute. Do bring anything which needs **mending** - all sorts of **repairs** can be carried out. “Greener Fram - action for a positive future”.

Monday 8 May 7 p.m. The final session of “**Soul to Soul**” at the home of Rayleen Finn. Matthew will be pleased to hear from anyone interested in joining a new study group to be held in the Autumn.

Tuesday 9 May, 7 p.m. The **East Anglian Academy of Ancient Music** Annual General Meeting

The UNITARIAN ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS (GA),
took place just before Easter.
Matthew has written a review, on **Page 3**:

This year's GA Meetings

were held at the Hilton Hotel near the NEC, Birmingham, for the third year running – a comfortable and convenient venue for a gathering of just over three hundred Unitarians and friends.

Of interest to Unitarians in Suffolk was the conferring of the title **Honorary Member of the General Assembly** – the highest honour the GA offers - on **Rev. Cliff Reed** in recognition of his services to the Unitarian community at congregational, national and international levels. It was good to be able to witness this on behalf of Framlingham Unitarians given Cliff's long ministry at Ipswich (1976 – 2010) at the same time serving Framlingham and the former Chapel at Bedfield.

Rev. Charles Van Den Broeder, whose previous ministries include Norwich and Great Yarmouth (95-03), was elected national GA President 2017-2018. Also, taking up office was a partly new Executive Committee – the 'new boy' being me!

The Executive Committee have considerable responsibilities so my membership will require me to attend some meetings in London and elsewhere.

A personal highlight of the Meetings was the Opening Ceremony organised by Unitarians in Wales (Undodiaid Cymru) which took the form of a theatrical pageant with hymns relating the story of the community in West Wales. This could suggest a model for what to do on these occasions in future.

There were less motions for debate than in previous years.

A motion was approved to enable the Executive Committee to progress proposals for shortened Annual Meetings in future. This change would not come into effect before 2019 at the earliest but will make it more affordable for congregations to send delegates. This is a sensible move, but if shortened Meetings leave some people feeling frustrated perhaps their excess energy could be channeled into alternative, innovative gatherings? Just a thought!

Two excellent emergency motions were passed.

Firstly, following the terrorist attacks in Egypt on Palm Sunday: the GA extended *"deepest sympathy to the families and friends of more than forty Coptic Christians who were killed, and further to the Coptic Pope and Churches"* This motion was reported on Twitter and was widely re-Tweeted!

Secondly, Stockton Unitarians brought an emergency motion (which was passed overwhelmingly) deploring *"the harsh and degrading treatment of.... Irene Clennell... in February when she was taken away from her husband and family by the UK Border Agency...and then deported to Singapore.* The motion continues by calling on the government to *"immediately reinstate Irene Clennell's indefinite leave to remain.... cease the practice of using obscure technical issues to deport people who have long been fully integrated into British families..."* and *"instruct the UK Border Agency to treat persons subjected to deportation with the utmost care, dignity and respect."*

The Annual Meetings have multiple workshops: one to mention was the session led by Christine Smith of the new and growing Derby Unity congregation. Their weekly "gatherings" include a "good news story" – something taken from the news that is positive rather than negative. I like that idea.

In the light of last year's motion on combatting climate change, I attended the Buildings Advisory Panel (*aka* BAP) workshop. Some congregations had responded to the BAP request to report on energy usage and comparative figures were presented. New GA staff team member, Simon Bland, announced that he has helped to negotiate a special deal for congregations for better energy prices.

The outgoing Executive Committee have been driving forward a programme of activity called **Next Steps**. There were several slots at the Meetings related to aspects of this programme. One of the most significant of these is the Identity Project, which is about our congregations and our movement defining ourselves with greater clarity in order to increase public understanding.

In my view, a question facing the new Executive Committee is *"To what extent is this vital piece of work one that should, or can, be energised primarily from the centre?"* For me there is also a sense that the quality of our ongoing dialogue needs to become part of the answer as to what we stand for.

Rev. Matthew Smith

April 2017

Deadline for the June edition of *The Frambridge Chronicle* is noon, Monday 22 May 2017