



# Great Meeting Chapel Leicester

Newsletter for  
February and March 2012



*Crocuses in the Chapel garden*

**300 years of Freedom, Reason and Tolerance**

# Great Meeting Chapel Newsletter for February and March 2012

## SERVICES IN FEBRUARY

Sunday	5 <sup>th</sup>	11am	The Minister
Sunday	12 <sup>th</sup>	11am	The Minister
Sunday	19 <sup>th</sup>	3pm	The Minister
Sunday	26 <sup>th</sup>	11am	The Minister

## SERVICES IN MARCH

Sunday	4 <sup>th</sup>	11am	The Minister
Sunday	11 <sup>th</sup>	11am	The Minister
Sunday	18 <sup>th</sup>	3pm	<u>Mothering Sunday</u> The Minister
Sunday	25 <sup>th</sup>	11am	The Minister

*Items for inclusion in the April/May edition of the newsletter should be submitted by **Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> March** please.*

## DIARY NOTES:

**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup>** Coffee shop closed due to proposed demonstration in the city centre.

## DIARY FOR MARCH

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup>** **2.30pm** East Midland Unitarians District Quarterly Meeting at Derby.

*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.

(See exception above)

## From the Minister.....

Dear Friends,

For this issue of the newsletter I would like to share with you an idea of sublime simplicity and effectiveness, as told to me by my daughter Kate.

A man lost his arm, severed completely at the shoulder, in an accident. When he lost it, his arm had been in a raised position. Even after months of recovery when the wound had healed, the man felt as if he were still holding his arm in an upright position, and he was unable to relax his shoulder.

His doctor arranged for a mirror box to be placed in front of him and told him to stretch out his good arm, the box giving a reflection of it so that it appeared to him that he had two good arms again.

The man was told to raise both arms, which he did, and then to bring them both down again. He did so, and for the first time since the accident his shoulder was able to relax, his brain having been re-educated by the image it thought it saw.

The purity, simplicity, and immediate effectiveness of this treatment seems almost miraculous. It causes us to wonder whether a host of human ills might not be treated in a similar fashion by re-educating the brain. What might the possibilities be for psychiatric problems, compulsions, phobias and anti-social behaviour?

The forgiveness of sin is a parallel. The forgiveness of sin does not restore the missing limb or repair the damage of the past, but it does allow the individual to be free of the burden, and to once again lead a fuller life.

With best wishes to all members and friends.

*Arthur.*

Every human impulse  
derives from human love.  
When every human impulse dies,  
love is the impulse  
that survives.

We have been told  
its all we need, -  
often its all we have,-  
all we are and can be,  
described by human love.

A.S.



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# Burns Lunch.....

Scottish, half-Scottish, Sassenach, and other members and friends of the congregation put their national differences behind them on Sunday 22nd January to celebrate a Burns' lunch after the morning service. Delicious smoked salmon canapés, served accompanied by a tot of whisky, wetted the appetite for haggis and vegetarian haggis, tatties and neaps followed by traditional Cranach for dessert. A delicious lunch!

Readings from Burns and a lovely rendition of 'O my love is like a red, red rose' sung by **Morag Jones** had been included in the preceding morning worship.

Our grateful thanks, especially to Morag for organising this lovely lunch and to all her helpers for providing such a splendid and enjoyable repast.



Thanks to **Phil Archer** for these images of the day.

## Our Christmas Tree.....

Once again for the Christmas just passed our Chapel has been cheered by the donation by **Mrs Gwen Gimson** of our Christmas Tree, given in memory of her husband Ben who served for many years as chairman of our Vestry.

With our grateful thanks we add our warm congratulations to Mrs Gimson for her forthcoming 100th birthday on 24th May 2012.

## Radio Leicester Interview.....

On Sunday 22nd January last our minister took part in a short discussion on Radio Leicester on the subject of the proposal to introduce Lesbian and Gay Marriage legislation.

During the interview Arthur was able to make the distinction between the existing provision for Civil Partnerships and the proposed legislation, and how every congregation and every minister/leader who would wish to register themselves and their place of worship for Lesbian and gay marriage, would be able to do so after consultation.

Unitarian and Free Christians, along with the Society of Friends (Quakers) and the Liberal Jews are already on record as welcoming this move.

## Picture Gallery.....

Our thanks to **Tony Fletcher** for editing, printing and displaying our photo gallery in the Garden Room.

The display boards are frequently looked at and enjoyed by members and visitors alike. Showing images of Chapel and our activities throughout the year, the colourful display encapsulates life at Great Meeting.

## God may not be great, but religion can be.....

The following extracts are taken from an article in *The Times*, Saturday 28th January 2012, by **Janice Turner**.



Just before Christmas, lugging John Lewis bags down Oxford Street, Central London, I took a phone call containing grim news. Suddenly the garish stores and clamour of shoppers were physically unbearable. I had to be quiet and alone. Stumbling on through the crowds, I came to a church which I assumed, given the spate of London metal thefts, would be locked. Luckily, although deserted, it was open.

I went in, I threw down my bags and sat for a long while. A life-long non-believer, a former rowdy teenage atheist, I drank in the peace and left restored.

This, I discovered later, was St Giles-in-the-Fields, known as the Poet's Church, since Milton, Byron and Shelley had their children baptised here and Marvell is buried here; writers who evoked the joy of both earthly experience and the divine.

It stuck me that while intellectually I am on the side of Richard Dawkins, facing down the bigotry and illogic of belief, mindful of all religious intrusion into the secular political sphere, my soul has needs that science alone cannot address.

Where would the atheist firebrands have me go to feel sad, to reflect upon loss and the savage, unrelenting passage of time? A science museum maybe, an art gallery; a psychotherapists couch; under a night sky, marvelling at the infinity of the cosmos? All have their appeal, but none would have the church's mystery.

\*\*\*\*\*

Religion has generated not only great architecture and art, but a framework within which to eat, celebrate and grieve together. Its rituals are deliberately soothing. It offers a code of etiquette defining how to behave--something modern libertarians rail against, but which humans crave as a relief from awkwardness and confusion.

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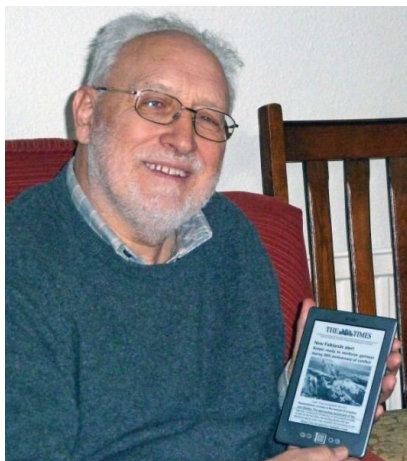
....Do atheists need to build temples of rationalism that emulate the awe and wonder of religious buildings? Why bother when in every other street there is a lovely and mysterious place like St Giles-in-the Fields, where it is perfectly permissible to reply to the question "Is there a God?", by admitting I do not know.



## I love books and my Kindle.....

I love the smell, the feel and the look of books, but I now have a Kindle. Not instead of books, but as well as books. I love it!

A Kindle is about the size of a DVD case but much thinner. It allows me to download and store books from the internet. The first Kindle bonus for me is that the screen is very easy to read and if I wish to I can easily change the size and type of the font. That's great for my eyes. Also; my Kindle is much lighter than most books and that means it's easier for me to manage with my arthritic fingers and shoulders. Suddenly reading in bed is a joy once again! Thirdly, there are countless numbers of books to choose from at the Amazon website. Most of them cost less than their paper counterparts and many of them are free, especially the classics. If I wish to I can load thousands of books onto my Kindle; I'll never be short of reading on holiday and I no longer have to carry heavy books in my travel case.



When I want a new book I can either browse the Amazon website on my computer or, if I am near a wifi signal, I can search on my Kindle. One click and the book is loaded onto it; wherever I am in the world.

I still get the Guardian newspaper delivered through my door every morning by the paper-boy. But now, in addition, The Times or Sunday Times is delivered to my Kindle each morning, just as long as my wifi is switched on. The Times reaches me before the Guardian!

I hear some of you say "but I love books". So do I and I still read them but this extends my reading experience. Of the many Kindle owners I know they are **all** book lovers.

I am reading far more now and that surely is the important thing.

*Our thanks to **Alan Bailey** for sharing his Kindle experience with us.*

# G M NEWS .....

## Condolences.....

It is with very great sadness that we record the death on 10th December last of **Alison Soulsby** at the age of 63 years. The funeral was held at Great Meeting on 20th December the minister officiating, with cremation following at Gilroes.

A large congregation sang "Jerusalem" and "The day Thou gavest", and heartfelt readings and tributes from daughters **Cassie, Ellie** and **Lauren** and from **Peter** himself, were given.

The universal sadness at Chapel which greeted the news of Alison's death was the clearest expression of the deep respect and affection in which she was held.

Our sympathies are extended to all her family and friends.

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We are also extremely sorry to record the death of **Margaret Ratcliffe**, sister to **Freda Betts**.

Margaret passed away in Worcester hospital on 12th January last at the age of 86 years.

The funeral took place at Berrow Parish Church on 26th January. Margaret grew up as a member of Great Meeting Sunday School and Choir. Like her sister Freda, she had a lovely voice and won a scholarship for her musical ability. She was in addition an accomplished actress and painter, exhibiting with the Malvern Art Society and in London.

Our deepest sympathies are with Freda and all her family at this sad time.

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We also record the sad death on 6th January of **Stanley Bellamy**, uncle to our member **Sue Harper**, who passed away at the age of 82 years.

Our condolences are with Sue and all her family in their loss.

## Art Donation to Chapel.....

Visitors to chapel can now view a marvellous print of an original linocut by local artist **Sarah Kirby**, depicting the front aspect of Great Meeting and Charles Berry House.

The work is the generous donation of **Cassie, Ellie** and **Lauren Soulsby**, all of whom have been married at GM, and have presented this print in gratitude.

We in turn are most grateful to them.

If you are interested in seeing more of Sarah Kirby's work, visit her website [www.sarahkirby.co.uk](http://www.sarahkirby.co.uk)

## Kevin Hose Tomola Orrala.....

Our thanks to **Alan Bailey** for keeping us updated on the progress of Kevin the child we help to support through the organisation "Plan".

**Kevin** continues to live in Playas, Ecuador with his family, where he attend Secondary school. His favourite subject is sport and he is in good health.

If you wish to contribute to Kevin's sponsorship, please leave your donation in the box provided in the Garden Room or give directly to Alan Bailey.



*Many thanks*

## Charles Berry House.....

As you may be aware, our tenants Brett and Randall Insurance services has now moved to a larger premises on the outskirts of the city. Over recent weeks Charles Berry House has been completely refurbished and decorated by them in readiness for a new tenant.

The Chapel Vestry agent is currently in negotiations in this regard and is hopeful that a new tenancy will soon be established.

## News.....

### New Flower Secretary.....

Our sincere thanks to **Jacqueline Flanagan** for becoming our new Flower Secretary. She replaces Morag Jones who retired last year.

Welcome Jacqueline, we are already enjoying your lovely arrangements.

Thanks are also due to all those who have arranged flowers throughout last year. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.



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.

### Chapel Fabric.....

Work continues to improve our chapel fabric.

Following last years theft of lead from the Chancel and Garden Room roofs our fabric warden **John Woodward**, often with help from his family, has erected a new secure fence at the sight of the break-in in the Chapel Garden. Several fallen headstones have also been set to rights after a back-breaking effort.

Our sincere thanks to **John, Gareth and Doug** for all their hard work on our behalf.

## News.....

### Coffee Shop Sales.....

As a result of the generous donations of books throughout last year we have raised an amazing **£653** towards Chapel funds. The sale of 'Brother-in-law's Jams' totalled **£500** which is another terrific result. These amounts, along with **£1906.96** profit from our weekly Saturday Morning Coffee Shop, are a great boost to the Chapel finance.

We would very much like to thank everyone who has given of their time to help Annie each Saturday throughout the year, to all those who come along and support us, and especially to **Simon Cullen**, Annie's Brother-in-law, who has just supplied his latest batch of Marmalades and Jams.

**Please keep those books coming in!**

*Thanks, Annie*

### Coffee Shop Rota.....

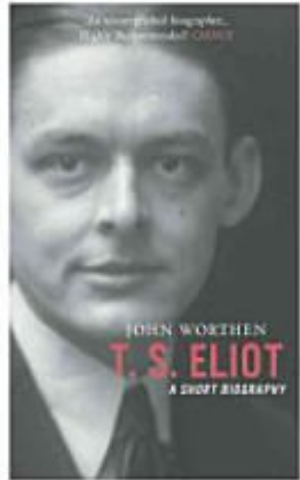
If you are free one Saturday to help with the Saturday Coffee Shop, please add your name to the sign-up sheet in the Garden Room or email Diane [fossilmatron@msn.com](mailto:fossilmatron@msn.com) with your chosen date.

### 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.....

### T S Eliot - A Short Biography by John Worthen



John Worthen's biography of T S Eliot - "A Short Biography" as the cover indicates - provides just 234 pages of very readable and thoughtful information on possibly the most influential of the 20th century poets. It deals carefully with Eliot's American background and his Unitarian childhood, giving succinct reasons why he so determinedly turned his back on his religious upbringing.

Eliot also turned his back upon his American roots, espoused England and the Church of England, and became a British citizen.

While Eliot's reaction to the Unitarianism of his youth was unequivocal, we might say of him that you can take the boy out of Unitarianism, but you can't take the Unitarianism out of the boy. Indeed, a strong argument can be made that the American Puritanism and the strong Unitarian sense of personal responsibility which he grew up with remained deeply ingrained in his character, and went a long way to shaping the stifling self-control and formality of his behaviour and indeed his writing. It did not however blunt his sensibility or curb his natural inclination towards mystical spirituality.

Worthen supplies the reader with fascinating descriptions of Eliot's creativity and its link to the events in his life, detailing his long and tormented first marriage to Vivien and the very significant impact this had on his work. Aspects of the author's interior life examined in relation to all the major works (The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock, The Wasteland, The Four Quartets) show the very close nature of Eliot's choice of imagery and reference to his own direct life experience.

The portrait emerges of a highly intelligent man who struggled to free himself from the restrictions of his age, while at the same time failing to free himself from his own exacting standards. It is a revealing narrative and a fascinating exploration of a troubled soul who finally found peace in a degree of conformity.

The thoughtfully chosen photographs which accompany the text tell their own revealing tale of a compelling figure.

*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.**

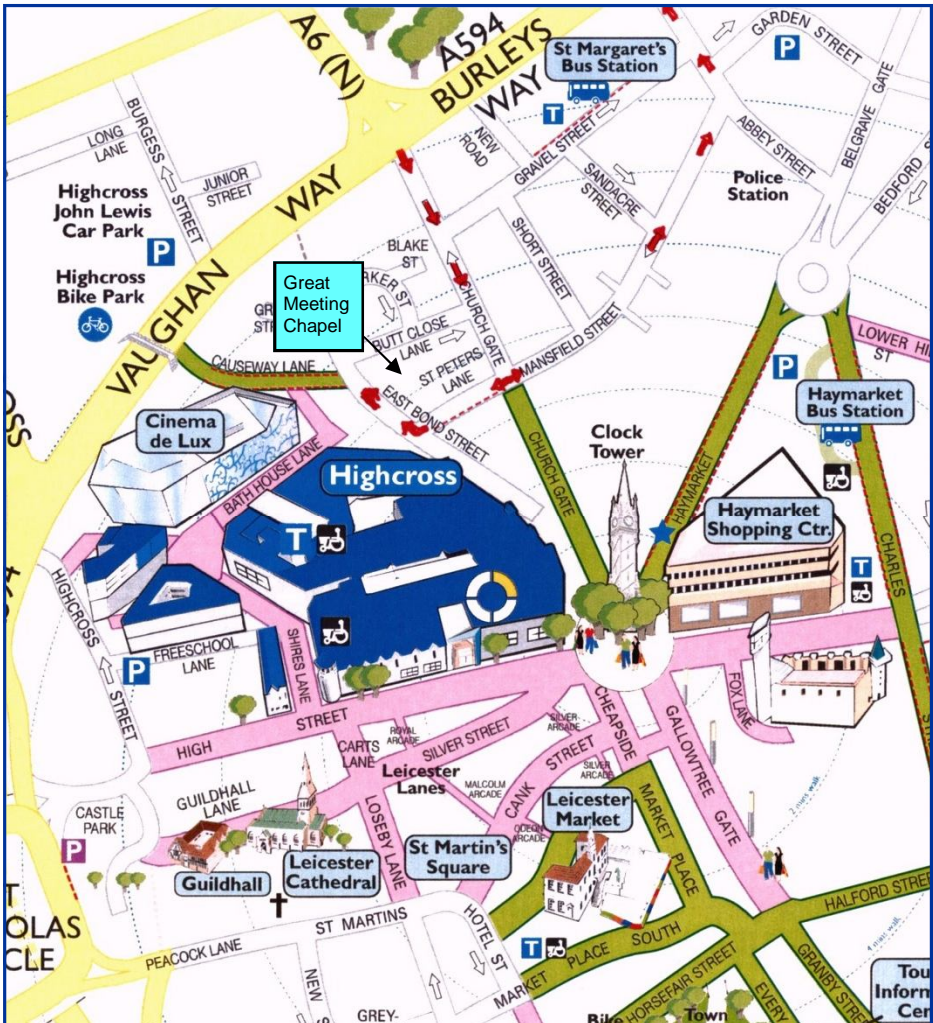
**Wi-Fi Hotspot!**



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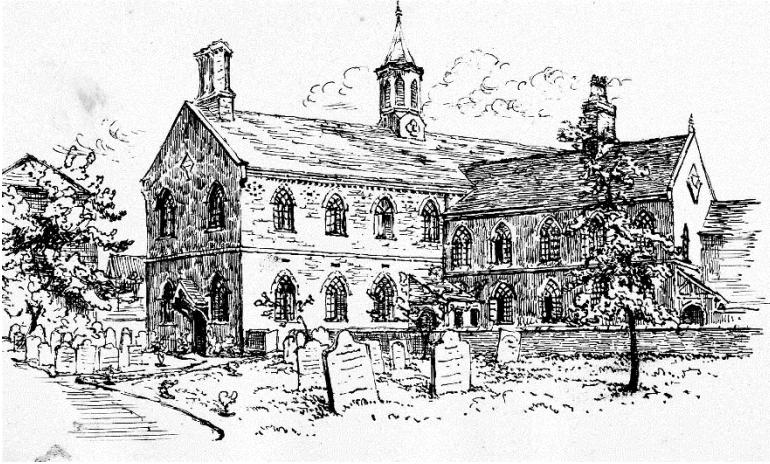
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**The Old Schoolrooms (now Charles Berry House)  
built 1859**

**Great Meeting Unitarian Chapel**

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