



Great Meeting Chapel Leicester

Newsletter for
Winter 2012-2013



Great Meeting Garden in the snow.

Great Meeting Chapel Newsletter for November & December 2012 & January 2013

Services in November

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

Services in December

Sunday	2 nd	11am	The Minister
Sunday	9 th	11am	The Minister
Sunday	16 th	3pm	<u>Carol Service</u> The Minister
Sunday	23 rd	11am	The Minister
Tuesday	25 th	10am	<u>Christmas Morning Service</u> The Minister (1/2 hour)
Sunday	30 th	11am	The Minister

Services in January

Sunday	6 th	11am	The Minister
Sunday	13 th	11am	The Minister
Sunday	20 th	3pm	The Minister
Sunday	27 th	11am	The Minister

*Items intended for the Feb/March Newsletter should be handed in by
20th January if possible, please.*

Winter Diary

Sunday 11th November 11am: The Remembrance Service will begin with two minutes silence.

Saturday 17th November 1pm: Theology Group Meeting in the Christopher Wykes Room

Saturday 1st December 2.30pm: East Midland District Quarterly Meeting at The Old Meeting House, Mansfield

Sunday 16th December 3pm: Carol Service followed by Christmas Tea in the Garden Room.

Tuesday 25th December: Christmas Day There will a short half-hour of carols, prayers and readings at 10 o'clock in the Chapel to welcome in Christmas morning.

Saturday 19th January 1pm: Theology Group Meeting in the Christopher Wykes Room

Sunday 27th January 12.30pm: Burns lunch following the morning service.

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 except the 22nd and 29th December.

Our thanks to Tony Fletcher and Charles McIntosh for their photographs which are included in this edition of the newsletter.

From the Minister.....

Dear Friends,

For many years now, and certainly for the duration of my own ministry, it has become habitual for us at this time of the year to deplore the commercialisation of Christmas. Ministers from their pulpits, the Archbishop of Canterbury in his seasonal address, even the Pope from the Vatican, all echo the chorus of disapproval, and we find many members of many different congregations in agreement on this point. Christmas seems to start too early in the shops (often by October), and the pressure upon us to spend upon presents and food is reinforced daily by an apparently unstoppable and unavoidable stream of advertising. Consumerism today appears to prop up our national and indeed global economy.

When I was growing up shopping was a chore, a basic necessity. Today it has become many people's leisure time interest or past-time. For some it has grown into their primary purpose, and identity has become synonymous with one's ability to buy: "getting and spending" (as Wordsworth expressed it) has become our primary motivation in life, and accumulating things our great aim.

I know that for some people shopping has grown into the most important thing that they do, much more important (for example) than their religion. They believe firstly and foremost in having enough money to spend, to be able to buy.

Now this being the case, and remembering that consumer confidence is what sustains our economy and involves the passions of so many of us, -- far from being a cause of complaint or lamentation at Christmas, I would suggest that if it weren't for the overwhelming emphasis placed on the commercialisation of Christmas, there would be no Christmas left to celebrate, -- because the residual respect for Christianity alone and the birth of Jesus which we observe at this time of the year, would simply be insufficient in itself to sustain our interest or enthusiasm for the celebration. Remove the great raft of material and commercial concerns, and Christmas would just sink like some massive Titanic below the waves.

Christmas cards, special postage stamps, trees at £50, refrigerators crammed with food, shelves full of cheap booze, and a sea of presents for family and friends, are precisely what Christmas is now about for the majority of the population: parties, paper hats, being merry, having fun. Some of us turn up for Carols, a few for Midnight Mass or Christmas Morning Devotions, but these things are merely marginal when compared with the time, effort and expense which are devoted to the expected elements of conspicuous consumption.

So, far from standing up and bewailing the exploitation of a great religious festival, it would be wiser of us to recognise that Christmas is the enormous occasion it still is (enjoyed and celebrated by different cultures around the globe) , *because* of its commercial immensity, and not despite it !

Annie joins with the girls and myself in wishing all members and everyone associated with Great Meeting a very peaceful and joyous Noel !

Arthur.



Lines found in an abandoned chapel, unaccountably closed many years ago...

*Our dear small congregation
Never numbering more than 'teens,
Exhales a sweeter sanctity
Than a congregation that teems.*

*So do not lament that we are few;
Here each is ensconced in our favourite pew;
Give us this day our daily bread,
And let troublesome visitors go elsewhere instead.!*

London 2012.....A moment in time

Cathy and I were fortunate to be able to experience several events at this year's Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Olympic torch

Our first 'event' was taking two of our Grandchildren, Molly and Thomas, to see the Olympic flame pass though Leicester on a wet evening in July.

Despite the bad weather (how often did we say that this summer?) the city's streets were lined with excited children and adults. After a wet wait the procession arrived, led by groups of dancers and musicians dressed in costumes so bright and flamboyant



that we forgot our cold, damp surroundings. Then the highlight: a runner arrived carrying the Olympic flame. He was cheered by a wave of spectators as he passed along the city's streets. Even the security police surrounding him were dressed in bright, light grey track suits and were full of smiles. Our grandchildren thoroughly enjoyed the evening, although I'm not sure whether their favourite part was having a meal out with Granny and Grandad afterwards!

Olympic Events

Meanwhile, our daughter Alice had managed to secure some tickets for several Olympic and Paralympic events and she kindly asked us if we would like to use some. The phrase "a once in a lifetime experience" has been over-used this year, but it is nonetheless true, so we eagerly accepted her kind offer.

We were not disappointed. Between us we were able to watch men's indoor volleyball, women's football, synchronised swimming and table tennis, at venues such as Earls Court, Excel Centre, Wembley Stadium and the Olympic Aqua Centre. The quality of athleticism was of the highest calibre. However, it was the atmosphere at each of these events which struck us. I have watched live sport, of many types, in a variety of places for almost sixty years but the enthusiastic, friendly and patriotic excitement generated by spectators from each country was quite staggering and memorable; as was, for the most part, the sporting attitude of the competitors.

Paralympic Games

Cathy and I were also privileged to be able to view paralympic athletics. We were part of a packed Olympic stadium which was again buzzing with excitement as various track and field events were happening simultaneously, including shot put, high jumping running, javelin, long jumping. While we were there a British double amputee (from the Midlands) won a gold medal in the 200 metres. The noise was almost deafening as 80,000 people cheered him on. Very, very quickly we realised that you were watching people who are superb athletes in their own right, and not just disabled people 'doing sport'.

Gamesmakers

Much has been made of the high quality of organisation of London 2012. It was indeed very good indeed. You were, for example, always marshalled smoothly from public transport to your chosen destination. And every ticket holder was given a free public transport pass for the day.

The dedication of the volunteers: the Gamesmakers, was also outstanding. They came from all walks of life: young, old and of many abilities. I have a fond memory of a young Muslim woman Gamesmaker with her head covered; she was smiling broadly as she gave 'high fives' to my young grandson (and everyone else) as we were making our way from a stadium to our train.

During the Games a Londoner had said that the atmosphere of the "friendly games" had spread onto the streets and that she had never felt so safe on London's streets. I hope some of that spirit will remain.

As a Londoner I am so pleased and proud that it seems as though the London 2012 Olympic Games will be remembered warmly for many years to come.



Alan Bailey

By popular request here is a copy of a reading recently given by the Minister during the morning service.

from Expect Life!

by Elizabeth Tarbox

Do not live too far in the past or the future; live now. Expect in the next moment a miracle: ten kinds of birds at the feeder, and the tracks of a fox in the snow.

Know always that joy and sorrow are woven together, one cannot be without the other. If you love, know that your love will bring you tears sometime; if you grieve, know that it is because you were willing to love.

Pick up a magnifying glass and scrutinize that flower, and see the pollen at the centre of the blossom: it is life's dust: death-defying life. Be astonished at the flower, arrested by its beauty.

Go out when you can in the garden early in the morning, and hope the wild geese fly by.

Laugh loudly, and be silly with your children or your grandchildren; and refuse to leave the dead behind, but bring their memory to all your chores and games and corners of quiet warm hours.

Do not be afraid to die today. But expect life !



Religion is reported as being good for mental health....

The Daily Telegraph recently reported that research by scientists in America has shown that regardless of which faith people belong to spirituality can enhance a person's well being.

Prof. Dan Cohen of the University of Missouri reports, "Our prior research shows that the mental health of people recovering from different medical conditions appears to be related to positive beliefs and especially congregational support and spiritual interventions."

The research carried out to determine the links between people's mental health, resulted in showing a higher level of spirituality prompted better mental health. This apparently was regardless whether the 'spirituality' was Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, Roman Catholic or Protestant.(!)

The researchers believe that 'spirituality' may help people's mental health because it provides people with the support and sense of belonging to a group or community.

Prof. Cohen also says, "With increased spirituality people feel a greater sense of oneness with the rest of the universe."

We ourselves know that we have long seen our chapel not so much as a building, but much more as a fellowship, and a fellowship within which we aim to accept each other as we are, support and encourage and at times even challenge one another, in finding a grander setting in which to live our lives.

Still, it's heartening to have the findings of scientists offering some confirmation of what we have long believed.

With thanks to *Rev. Derek Smith*

Coro Nostro Concert.....

On Saturday 20th October last Great Meeting became the venue for the most recent concert given by the **Coro Nostro** Choir led by **Lydia Hind**.

The concert began at 7.30pm and consisted of a variety of choral works, including some settings of Shakespeare, and pieces drawn from the fifteenth to the twentieth century. Two guest performances from **Rosie Curtis** on the oboe complemented the programme from the twenty-strong members of the choir, delighting the 40-odd audience members present.

Our thanks to Coro Nostro for their kind donation of half the proceeds from the concert (£115), for chapel funds

It is hoped that Coro Nostro will return to Chapel and make Great Meeting one of their annual venues, and we look forward to welcoming them back in 2013.



Coro Nostro performing at Great Meeting

Harvest Festival and Lunch.....

Harvest Festival this year was held on Sunday 7th October followed by the usual Sale of Produce and our Harvest Lunch.

Everyone enjoyed tucking into a delicious lunch and a good time was had by all.



Proceeds from the sale and profit from the lunch raised **£170** which has been sent to our Harvest Charity the **Red Cross UK**.

A big thank you to our hardworking organisers, to **Theresa Miller** for making and donating the delicious quiches and potatoes, **Morag Jones** for her yummy Plum Crumble and to every one who contributed to the good fellowship on this occasion.



Members and friends in the garden following the Harvest Lunch 2012

The Great Meeting Sunday Schools.....

Extracts from the Centenary Book of 1883

by Edith Gittins

'In the year of 1708 the Presbyterian Congregation, which had worshipped in a building in Hangman's Lane, removed to its newly erected home "The Great Meeting". At the same time was started the Day School, for about 20 scholars, boys and girls, which was supported by members of the congregation...

The Great Meeting Sunday School was established in 1783. Reference to it occurs in William Gardiner's *Music and Friends* : "...it was much better that parents should send their children to school on Sunday than permit them to wander about in fields, lying, as he had seen them, 'like ragged rascals under a hedge bottom.'"

At a later time the scholars of the "every-day" School seem to have been kept carefully distinct from those who attended the Sunday School; witness a rule, made in 1832, "that no child should be admitted to the Sunday School who attended a Day School." But at the beginning, probably, some of the boys and girls who were under master and governess for the six days, came on Sundays to be taught by the young men and maidens of the congregation.

Twenty years after the foundation, when Rev Charles Berry succeeded to the Great Meeting pulpit, there was teaching of reading and writing but also learning of hymns and Bible lessons... In the parlour of one of the little houses in the yard between the Meeting house and school, the senior classes of the Girls' Day School met by turns on Sunday mornings, to say catechism to "Madam Brewin". They wore their uniform of strong sound stuff dresses and aprons and capes of the same, bound with blue, with white caps and tippets. The catechism duly said, all children trooped "to meeting" into the gallery, right and left of the organ. This stood then, and till 1866, opposite the pulpit, which under its octagonal sounding board, was in the middle of the flat plain east side of the building, and high enough to command a view of the occupants of the square high-walled private-parlour-like pews, with their baize linings of various hues, and miscellaneous collections of cushions and 'basses' "

In 1859 the enlargement of the School Rooms was begun and completed the following year (this allowed for the needed enlargement of the Day school).

N.B. The wing of the present building previously used for class-rooms is the main part of the old school-house. Between this and the chapel yard, and facing the school were two cottages with gardens in front of them; and there was also a small room at the back of the cottages used as the Congregational Library. These buildings were all removed including a small part of the grave yard...

In 1878 the lower School-rooms were let to the School Board for six working days, the upper ones being kept for Sunday School and Congregational uses only...'

with thanks to Gwyn Jones



**Great Meeting Chapel
Leicester**

**Christmas Carols
by candlelight**

**Sunday 16th December
at 3pm**

- all welcome -

followed by

**Christmas Tea
in the Garden Room**

Come and join us with family and friends.

Christmas Tea Contributions.....

If you would like to contribute towards the **Christmas Tea** by baking a few mince pies or a cake, it would be very much appreciated.

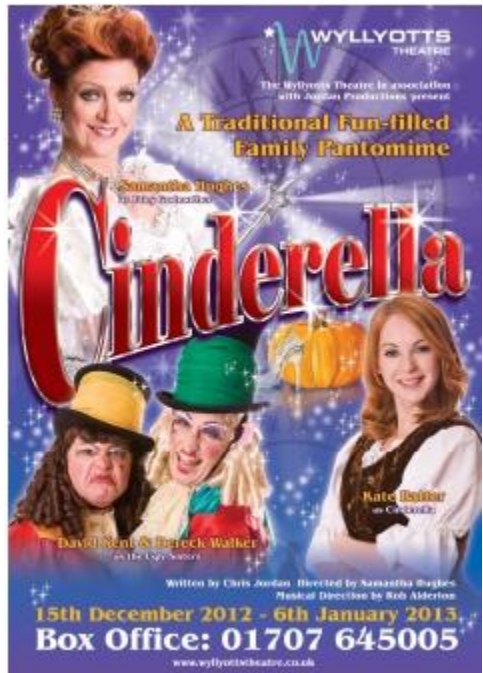
There is a sign-up sheet for volunteers in the Garden Room.

Panto' outing..... an invitation from Simon hall.

I'm intending to arrange to take groups of fans to see David & Dereck in panto at Potters Bar (Wyllotts Theatre).

The week-ends where I would investigate hiring a mini-bus (12-14 people) would be Saturday 29th, Sunday 30th December and then the final shows on Saturday 5th, Sunday 6th January and the shows would be the afternoon matinee performance.

Tickets for all shows are £16.50 per adult and then there would also be a cost to cover the transport and fuel.



If sufficient people would like to go, then I might also look at the option of a single trip in a coach (as we did two years ago) to take everyone at the same time.

Maybe you would be kind enough to let me know if you might be interested and which date(s) might best suit you:-

Saturday 29th December: 14:00

Sunday 30th December: 14:00

Saturday 5th January: 14:00

Sunday 6th January: 14:30

Sign up sheet in Garden Room!

G M News

And the award for Occupational Health Nurse of the Year goes to.... Diane Romano Woodward!



On 28th November 2012 at the Grosvenor House Hotel, London, **Diane Romano-Woodward** will be announced as the winner of the National Occupational Health Nurse of the Year award.

Among her many achievements are that as an independent adviser with a long-term interest in occupational skin disease and asthma, in 2003, Diane helped develop guidance for The British Occupational Health Research Foundation, winning the Bupa Health at Work Award (2005) and further developing guidelines for pre-employment screening for people with asthma in 2011. She was on the Health and Safety Executive working group on the same topic and contributed to the Royal College of Nursing's 2010 'Tools of the Trade' guidance.

Judges' comments: Diane embraces a vital part of the success of an OH nurse and OH service by sharing her knowledge, insight and information. Diane's work over the past 10 years in the management of allergic contact dermatitis and occupational asthma is recognised throughout the profession, and when it comes to social media you cannot find a more proactive and giving individual. If it was possible for all OH nurses to share and care to the same extent Diane does, then good practice would be the norm and not an aspiration.

Very well done Diane, we're proud of you.

Burns Lunch 2013.....

On **Sunday 27th January** after the morning service, members are invited to join our Scottish contingent in the Garden Room to celebrate Burns' Night with a traditional haggis lunch (veggie options available) with tatties and neaps, and Cranach to follow.

Our sincere thanks to **Morag** in anticipation!

G M News.....

Congratulations.....

Warmest congratulations to the Soulsby family on the arrival on 3rd October of **Samuel Peter Irwin**, an eighth grandchild for Sir Peter, a lovely son for **Lauren** and **Ian**, and a brother for **Ewan**.



Samuel pictured here with his Daddy Ian and big brother Ewan.

Coffee Shop Sales.....

As a result of the generous donations of books throughout the year we have again raised an amazing £600 for chapel funds. The sale of 'Brother-in-law's Jams' have contributed a further £200 profit which is another terrific result. These amounts along with monies raised from our weekly Saturday Morning Coffee Shop have enabled us to plant some new trees and shrubs in the garden and build composting bins, purchase a new hot water urn, afford new cutlery and china, replace the kitchen tap, supply chapel flowers when necessary, pay for cleaning products and provide Wi-Fi access, throughout the year.

I would very much like to thank everyone who has given of their time to help me each Saturday throughout the year: **Morag, Shirley, Jacky, Julie, Freda, Anne, Pam and Charles, Diane and John** and all those who have come along to enjoy the coffee and cake and support us. Special thanks to **Simon Cullen**, my Brother-in-law, for his tireless production of preserves of all kinds!

We've had fun and eaten vast quantities of cake!!!

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 with your chosen date.

News.....

Chapel car park keys and parking.....

A new padlock has been purchased for the car park gates. New keys are available for chapel members who require one. A £10 deposit for each key will off set the cost of the padlock. Please hand in all old keys in to Annie or Arthur and get your new key.

Parking during weekdays is limited to the four spaces closest to the Garden Room.

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

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.

Our thanks.....

Sincere thanks to all those members who have supported and assisted with the running of Great Meeting during this last year: **David Wykes** and **Peter Soulsby** for arranging the tenancy and the ramp! **David** and **Diane Romano-Woodward** for their financial wizardry in difficult times; **John Woodward** for all the work he has done to care for the fabric of the building and it's surrounds; **Tony Fletcher** for his photographic skills and providing us with such a splendid 'rouges gallery' in the Garden Room! **Julie (and Freda)** for making everywhere gleam; **David Kent, Simon Hall, Morag Jones, Freda and Jennifer** who have delighted us as our choir, and of course our musicians **Will, Qyan and Mark** for playing the organ so beautifully each Sunday. Not least, thanks to everyone who comes along to make Great Meeting fellowship so special.

Annie

And Finally.....

The Casual Vacancy by J K Rowling



I will 'fess up straight away and admit that large swathes of this review are taken from the 'Guardian', partly due to lack of time on my part but mostly because it accurately sums up my feelings about this book.

I enjoyed it, read it quickly and cheaply on my kindle, and was sorry to finish it. I described it to Arthur as a cross between Jane Austen and the Archers with huge knobs on! Eddie Grundy would definitely be the lovable rogue if he was included in its pages, although Susan Carter would fit right in.

The Casual Vacancy, set in the "pretty little town of Pagford", it is a study of provincial life, with a large cast and multiple, interlocking plots, drawing inspiration from Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot. The book has a righteous social message about responsibility for others. The only obvious parallel with the Potter books is that, like them, it is animated by a strong dislike of mean, unsympathetic, small-minded folk. The inhabitants of Pagford – shopkeepers, window-twitchers, Daily Mail readers – are mostly more realistic versions of the Dursleys, the awful family who kept poor Harry stashed in the cupboard under the stairs.

Behind its tourist-friendly façade – the hanging baskets, the war memorial, the scrubbed cottages – Pagford is of course a hot-bed of seething antagonism, rampant snobbery, sexual frustration and ill-disguised racism. The plot is set in motion when, on page five, its hero, Barry Fairbrother, falls down dead in the car park of the "smug little golf club". His death creates a "casual vacancy" on the parish council, and the forces of darkness, led by Howard Mollison, the obese delicatessen owner, see their chance to parachute in one of their own.

Barry, a man of "boundless generosity of spirit", had been the main opponent of their plan to reassign the Fields, a run-down sink estate, to the district council of the nearby city, Yarvil – thereby off-loading responsibility for its drug-addled inhabitants, and driving them out of the catchment area for Pagford's nice primary school. The election heats up when scurrilous but accurate accusations, posted by "the Ghost of Barry Fairbrother", start appearing on the council website.

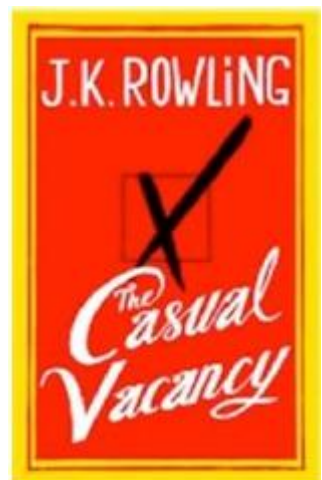
Rowling's characters become vividly alive and are reportedly drawn on her own mildly unhappy West Country childhood, in a village outside Bristol and then later outside Chepstow. The claustrophobic horror is nicely done: everyone knowing everyone; Howard, scheming from behind his hand-baked biscuits and local cheeses. Rowling is good at teenagers as you might expect but these young characters get up to things that Harry Potter probably never dreamed of: taking drugs, swearing, self-harming, having grimy casual sex. The book contains regular outbursts of four-letter words

The plot is often predictable; it requires a large helping of artificial contrivance, which I was happy to bob along with, and melodrama in the final act. Somehow it all finished too quickly for me and left a slight sense of disappointment.

The Casual Vacancy is no masterpiece, but I found myself completely absorbed in its pages, the characters vivid in my imagination. Often funny it also caused me to wring my hands at the needless agony one person can inflict upon another. One of those books that lingers on in your mind.

Go on, brace yourself and give it a go!

Annie



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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built 1859**

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