



Great Meeting Chapel Leicester

Newsletter - Autumn/ Winter 2022/3



300 years of Freedom, Reason and Tolerance

SUNDAY SERVICES

October 2022

- 2nd (11:00) Simon Hall (Circle Service in Garden Room)
9th (11:00) Simon Hall **HARVEST FESTIVAL**
16th (11:00) Rev Mark Hutchinson (Cotswold Group/Transformers)
23rd (11.00) Rev Winnie Gordon (Birmingham New Meeting)
30th (11.00): Rev, Shammy Webster (Stand Chapel, Whitefield)

November 2022

- 6th (11:00): Angela Maher from Birmingham New Meeting Church
13th (11:00): Simon Hall
20th (11:00): Mark Hutchinson from Cheltenham and Gloucester

December 2022

- 4th (11:00): Simon Hall
11th (11:00): Gavin Lloyd
18th (3.00 pm) Simon Hall **CAROL SERVICE**

January 2023

- 1st (11:00): Simon Hall
8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th January: To be decided.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- ◆ Sunday 9th October **Harvest Festival/Lunch**: - come and join with us for both a special worship service followed by a 'bring and share' lunch (please let us know what you could bring to eat)
- ◆ 18th December (3.00 pm) **Carol Service** followed by tea and refreshments In the Garden Room
- ◆ 20th December Dementia Friendly Service with Leicester Musical Memory. *Volunteers needed.*

CHAPEL UPDATE

As you know, we are in the process of appointing a new minister and have been visited by Reverend Shammy Webster and by Arek Malecki, both of whom led contrasting and very interesting services. Shammy has kindly agreed to lead service on 30th October. Your feedback on this will be most welcomed. In the meantime, please see opposite for how services will be covered.

Thanks to Simon for arranging these services. He will also continue to hold **Soul Haven half hours on Thursdays at 6.15pm via Zoom**, highly recommended. The Friday Coffee morning is currently suspended but we hope to reinstate it soon.

A group from the National Lottery Heritage Fund visited us at the end of July and professed themselves very happy with the restoration programme. They said that they were pleased with the way that the grant has made a real difference to the chapel.

We still have a few elements of the programme to finish including purchase of some items such as a picnic table and roof insulation for above the garden room. Unfortunately a part of the plaster cornice on the Butts lane side has fallen off, possibly due to shrinkage of the wooden framework in the hot weather. We await estimates for repair.

Congregational Support Lead Simon Hall has relinquished this role in order to enrol in the first year of a BA course in Theology, Ministry and Mission, with the aim of becoming a Unitarian Ministry Student in 2023.

We wish him the very best in his endeavours and thank him for his invaluable work for the Chapel in 2021/2022.

The Zoom Team, [Gabi, Huw, David K and Peter] have been dedicated in their achievement of zooming services from the Chapel itself. There have been numerous technical issues to successfully overcome and considerable time and effort on the day is required to make this a regular success. Thanks to them all from the congregation and from those who might find it difficult to attend chapel in person on a particular day.

Mike Druquer

RESTORATIONS CELEBRATION

On Sunday 26th June the Chapel celebrated the completion of the programme of restoration with a special programme of activities, ably co-ordinated by Simon.

The Chapel and gardens were open to the public for viewings from 10.00 AM. Then, at 11.00, Simon held a thirty minute Soul Haven, followed by refreshments in the garden room.



At 12.30 the Great Meeting Five jazz group, accompanied by David on vocals, entertained members of the congregation and visitors with an wonderful selection of standards as they enjoyed a picnic lunch in the garden



At 2.00 Mike gave an illustrated presentation on the works and roofing project in the Christopher Wykes room. Everyone then made their way into the Chapel which was looking at its very best thanks to a team of helpers who had pitched in to clear up the last traces of the mess left by the builders.



At 3.00 pm there was a Thanksgiving Service led by Simon and attended by over 50 people. In addition to hymns, musical offerings, prayers and readings there was an address by Rev. Sue Wooley (President of the Unitarian General Assembly). Sue gave a brief overview of the history of the Chapel and expressed her delight in seeing it restored to its former

glory. She also expressed admiration and thanks to all those involved in bringing the project to fruition.

In acknowledgement of his leadership of the restoration the service concluded with a special presentation to Vestry Chairman Mike. The photo opposite shows him holding one of the items he was gifted - a quirky reminder of the success of



his beloved Leicester City Football Club in the 2017 FA Cup Final.

Nicky Drucquer

VISIT OF MUSICAL MEMORY BOX

In August we were delighted to welcome Leicester Musical Memory Box with a party of 15 of their clients who took part in our 'Memory Trail' of the Chapel devised in conjunction with the Arts Society.



Following tea and cake we guided the participants around the chapel visiting a number of 'stations' and were then entertained by Robin Lister on the organ and finished with a short 'sing song'. The feedback on the session was excellent and Musical

Memory Box have booked our chapel on Tuesday December 20th at 2pm for their annual 'Dementia Friendly Carol Service' at which we can anticipate over 100 attendees. This service is usually held at the Cathedral, currently closed due to renovations.



HINCKLEY U3A CHURCH VISITING GROUP

Mike led this very engaging group on a tour of the building with an explanation of the restoration programme which they greatly enjoyed. Explaining briefly about Unitarianism however proved to be something of a challenge for him – he finished by directing the attendees to the [excellent] leaflets we have on display, and rather wishing a Minister could have been present.

SCHOOL VISIT

We welcomed Forest Lodge School for a second successful school visit on 22nd June. Once again, the pupils showed a lively interest in the Chapel's history and features. A big thank you to our volunteers – Tony for guiding and Robin for playing the organ, and also to Nicky's sister Gill who came up from Oxford to lead the visit pro bono with considerable expertise

VISIT OF LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

A big thanks to Tony Fletcher for once again guiding a group around the Chapel. This visit took place on September 24th. Leicester Civic Society have featured us several times in their publications so it was great to be able to welcome them for a proper visit to the restored interior.

On the topic of thanks to Tony. The vast majority of photos used in this newsletter are his. This includes the one on the front cover which shows Narborough Church with the Union Jack flying at half mast as a sign of respect to make the death of Queen Elizabeth II

ORGAN RECITAL

On the 9th September we held an organ recital entitled 'Bach to Back' performed by internationally renowned organist and improviser Nigel de Gaunt Allcoat. Nigel's playing was wonderful and he treated also us to a number of anecdotes about the life of J S Bach, emphasising the composer's versatility and energy, as witnessed both by his musical output and procreative abilities (he had 20 children). We had refreshments in the intermission so the Garden Room was once again brought into good use. Taking place just 48 hours after the Queen's death we did consider cancelling but rightly decided against, not least because as a finale Nigel performed a 10 minute improvisation on the anthem 'God save our gracious Queen' which was ended with a rousing sung chorus of 'God save our gracious King'. I like to think that it was the first time sung in public in Leicester.



Many thanks to Nigel for performing for us as part of our Heritage Outreach programme and staying afterwards to answer questions. And a special thanks also to David Kent for setting it all up.

Mike Drucquer

TEA IN THE GARDEN/ HERITAGE OPEN SCHEME

This year's tea in the garden event took place on Saturday 10th September and was thoroughly enjoyed by visitors and helpers alike. The event was timed to coincide with the first day of the annual 'ride'n'stride' weekend (which attracted a total of 113 on-foot visitors and cyclists to Chapel over the two days), and the start of a 10 day national heritage week. For the first time ever the doors of chapel were open to visitors on all 10 of these days. Thanks to all members of congregation who gave up their time to make this valuable community outreach activity possible. Gratitude is particularly due to Tony who went over and beyond in staffing the rota and who gave many well appreciated guided tours over the period. His favourite suggestion, received from a visitor, was that, in future, it would be nice if guides could be dressed in historical costume!



CORO NOSTRO CONCERT

On 24th September, this choir gave a concert at the Chapel.

They performed a very wide variety of music from mediaeval Sephardic to Ultra Modern (with the choir improvising sea sounds!).

We had a chance to hear the (freshly tuned) piano in a piece by Duke Ellington dedicated to our late Queen. It sounded magnificent. Another highlight was Purcell's "Evening Hymn" sung by Andrew Radford. We also had a reading of "Dover Beach" by Matthew Arnold. This is the poem that gave the "Sea of Faith" movement its name.

There was hardly a weak moment in the entire concert. It proved once again that the Chapel has exceptionally good acoustics for music. If you missed it, you must make up for that mistake by attending the choir's Christmas Concert. Look on Facebook for the date, time and venue.

Robin Lister



PUB AND GRUB MEET UP

On Friday 8th July several members of the congregation met up for a social at The Marquis of Wellington Pub. They were joined by Manish's friends Trusha and Mitesh Soma. A similar event took place on September 29th and further meet ups are planned . All welcome.



MANJULA MOURNS THE QUEEN



In the sad days following the death of Her Majesty congregation member Manjula Sood was in demand with local media for her reflections and stories about meeting the Queen on 11 separate occasions, 4 of which were formal dinners!

This photo was taken at the royal audience

in 2009 at which Manjula was awarded her OBE by the late Queen. In an interview on Radio Leicester Manjula recalled an exchange she had had with the Queen a few weeks earlier, at a dinner in honour of a state visit by the President of India. The Queen had been interested to learn that she lived with her mother. Encouraged by this Manjula contacted the palace to request an extra ticket so that her mother, as well as her two sons and daughter in law, could attend the award ceremony. The request was granted and permission was kindly given so that the family could drive their car right up to the gates so her mother didn't have to do much walking.

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