

# Rivington Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel



Founded 1662

Built 1703

*"Here let no man a stranger be"*



Aug - Oct 2013

[www.ukunitarians.org.uk/rivington](http://www.ukunitarians.org.uk/rivington)

[www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk](http://www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk)

## Chairman's Letter

As always, we have just had another very busy quarter, but with different things from normal taking place.

The Rivington Spring Festival happened at the beginning of May and was very well supported by our congregation and visitors alike. We had over 120 visitors and made a little money (£87) towards Chapel funds.

We were honoured later in May to have the General Assembly President, Rev Bill Darlison, taking our Anniversary service. We had a good turnout and it was a real treat for us all as Bill regaled us with a story about monkeys and caps. Bill and Morag, his wife, were unfortunately unable to stay for the Anniversary meal. This took place at the Yew Tree, Anglezarke, and was enjoyed by all.

All the stops were pulled out in June for the celebration of the life and times of the suffragette Emily Wilding Davison at which many of the congregation dressed in "Edwardian" costume. Iris Wharton was the principal driving force behind the proceedings, having researched and written all the parts. Judith Crompton very kindly and expertly took the service, which was again a welcome treat for the eighty plus people who attended. Visitors Gordon and Veronica Walker kindly gave narratives as did our own Dennis Crompton. The entrance to the chapel was adorned by a delightful floral wreath created by Jo Clark and special apparatus and banners were made by Leighton Jones's practised hand. Joan Thursby spent many industrious hours making Chapel ready, perfecting the candle arrangements and ribbons among many other things. I, as chairman, (having typed-up the parts) gave the toast to Emily - "Deeds not Words" - which was

very well received indeed.

Couple to this our now annual event, the “Strawberry Tea”, with sumptuous fresh strawberries, fresh cream and delicious scones all generously donated by our organist Roy Shepherd and you have, truly, a day to remember. Hearteningly there were about a dozen or so young people who were able to experience first hand (and not on telly) a meaningful and joyous celebration of this sort.

This is what we achieve when we work together, working within and to the strengths of our congregation. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to our congregational committee, without whom this and other events are simply not possible. I speak not just as chairman, but on behalf of all our visitors and future members of the congregation who have you to thank for all this and more. THANK YOU.

The service was originally going to be taken by Rev Jane Barraclough from Cross Street Chapel but due to serious health issues this was not to be. Our thoughts and prayers continue to go out to Rev Jane who is making a moderate recovery and has recently been able to resume her ministry at Cross Street. We look forward to seeing Jane take a service for us on 17 November.

As a result of matters that arose at the AGM this year we had a special congregational meeting on 16 June when a chapel leadership role was discussed and voted on. I should explain that after a full and frank discussion had taken place, two proposals were considered. The first, that we maintain the status quo, was voted against. The second, that we should appoint a “Lay Person in Charge”, was voted for. I, Vince McCully, having been proposed by Geoff Newey and seconded by Joan Thursby, was voted into that position. I had explained that I

see the position more as a title that would be more useful for external perceptions of the chapel structure than anything else.

I was, I hope, able to allay concerns that the number of Sunday services I would be taking would not increase and would remain at 5-6 per year maximum. This is in light of the fact that we so enjoy our visiting preachers and the raised profile that this gives us within the wider Unitarian and Free Christian community. In fact, I am more likely to move aside and forfeit services in order to fit in our very welcome visiting preachers than increase my number of services. Rites of passage, along with our services and events, will continue to dominate the priorities of my calendar.

Our next team event is the Late Summer Fair which we combine with Heritage Open Day. This year it will be held on Saturday 14th September (see notice later in the newsletter). It is such a lot of fun when we get together on these open days and everyone's efforts are most certainly valued, whether it's lending a hand at the stalls or in the form of home produce, bottles and tombola prizes, greengrocery, handicrafts or "bric a brac". Please be assured that no contribution is too small to help at these events.

After this it's the Rivington Pilgrimage which is to be held on Saturday 5th October. The service will be led by Marion Baker who is the GA (General Assembly) Vice President elect. Before the service, at the Hall Barn, Neville Kenyon will propose the toast to civil and religious liberties. Again we are honoured to hold this event which only comes around every three years. We are already receiving enquiries and more details are to be found in the notice later in the newsletter. Suffice it to say all assistance in the arrangements beforehand and on the day will be most gratefully received.

So, a lot to report again; let's pray that our congregation remains harmonious and as committed as ever, that we enjoy good health and happy times and that we are successful in our endeavours.

Amen

God Bless, *Vince*

Chairman

Lay Person in Charge

## **Late Summer Fair and Heritage Open Day**

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2013 11am to 4pm

Come and lend a hand at the stalls or bring some home made produce, tombola prizes, greengrocery, handicrafts or “bric a brac”.

All help is appreciated

### **Notes from the Secretary**

#### **Late Summer Fair**

I am writing to ask for your support for this event by contributing any crafty products that you make, e.g. knitting, crochet, sewing, jewellery or painting etc. It would be wonderful if you could donate them.

## **Chapel Flowers**

As you may be aware from the last newsletter, it was suggested at the AGM that the flowers donated for the Chapel's Sunday Services could perhaps be given to the Minister or sent to an Old People's Home. I am writing to ask your opinion on this matter. Some ladies I have spoken to are not bothered either way, but some (myself included) want their flowers to stay in Chapel. At the AGM, it was said that no one sees them after the Sunday Service, as the Chapel is closed until the next service when the flowers are replaced. This is not always strictly true, as there are times when a Christening takes place during the week. As flowers are not provided by the parents, it is much appreciated by the families to see fresh flowers in the Chapel. If you have any strong views about your donation of flowers please let me know.

Many thanks

**Joan Thursby**

## **Trustees Matters**

The next meeting of the Chapel Trustees will be on Wednesday 18 September. If anyone has any concerns regarding the fabric of the Chapel that they would like the Trustees to discuss, please would they bring them to my attention before that date.

Many Thanks

**Peter Bearon**  
**Chairman**

[trustchair@rivingtonchapel.org.uk](mailto:trustchair@rivingtonchapel.org.uk)

# RIVINGTON PILGRIMAGE

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2013

The service will be led by Marion Baker,  
GA Vice President Elect

Toast to civil and religious liberties will be proposed by  
Neville Kenyon - Bury

ITINERARY:    12:30pm Arrive Rivington Hall Barn  
                  1:00pm    Lunch  
                  2:45pm    Process (or drive) to Rivington  
                                  Chapel  
                  3:15pm    Service will commence

Lunch will cost £12.50

Menu: Roast Chicken Dinner, Meringue Nest, Coffee & Tea

Vegetarian option: Onion, Marjoram and Crème Fraîche Tart.

Tickets available from: Joan Thursby, Frank Ascroft, Vince McCully

Please send SAE with cheques made out to "Rivington Chapel"  
(see back page for contact postal addresses)

SAT NAV information:

Rivington Barn: BL6 7SB      Rivington Chapel: BL6 7SE  
(rural location - approximate position only)

## **Opening the Chapel to the Public**

On Sunday 16 June, Alison and Peter opened the Chapel a bit earlier than usual so that visitors to Rivington could have a chance to look round before the service. Over the space of a couple of hours, a dozen people came in. Most of these, from their entries in the Visitors Book, live fairly locally and had never been inside the Chapel before. They all seemed very impressed by what they saw and were particularly interested in the box pews. Vince also opened up early on Sunday 7 July and was able to welcome another 10 or so visitors.

Over the next few months, there will be further opportunities for people to see inside the Chapel. Alison and Peter will be opening up at 12 noon on Sunday 4 August. Then, in September, there is the Late Summer Fair and Heritage Open Day on Saturday 14th followed by the Pilgrimage on 5 October. After this, as the winter months tend to be rather chilly in Chapel, we will probably wait until Spring 2014 before opening to the public again. If anyone else would be willing to take a turn at opening up the Chapel next year, please let the committee know.

## **Emily Wilding Davison**

Derby Day 2013 was the 100th anniversary of the death of Emily Wilding Davison, who was fatally injured when she stepped on to the racetrack at Epsom and was trampled by the horse of King George V. Her action, in support of the Women's Suffrage Movement, was commemorated at Rivington by a service on Sunday 2 June.

The service was put together by Iris Wharton, who had undertaken a great deal of research into Emily's life and times, including a visit to



Morpeth in Northumberland where she is buried. Morpeth, the home of Emily's family, is marking this anniversary with a programme of events and exhibitions entitled "Emily Inspires!"

At Rivington, the service included hymns that were sung at Emily's funeral: Fight the Good Fight, Who Would True Valour See and Onward Christian Soldiers. Judith Crompton read the words put together by Iris to tell us about Emily's life and the events which led to her death. There were contributions from Dennis Crompton, Gordon Walker and Veronica Walker which included an outline of the development of the Women's Suffrage Movement and some contemporary accounts of the events. At the end of the service, Vince McCully proposed a toast to Emily with the words, "Deeds not Words", a motto of the Women's Social and Political Union.

It was lovely to see so many people in Chapel, many of whom had dressed in appropriate period costume. The WSPU colours of purple, white and green were much in evidence in the candles, flowers, ribbons tied to the Chapel gates and the "Votes For Women" sashes.

Among the congregation were members of Bolton Quaker Meeting who reminded us of a direct connection between Rivington and the Women's Suffrage Movement. Edith Rigby, the founder of the Preston branch of the WSPU, set fire to Lord Leverhulme's bungalow on July 7 1913. On Saturday, 6 July there were some events commemorating this action, which included a rally in Victoria Square, Bolton and a picnic in Rivington near the site of the bungalow.

## **Snippets from the Past**

Continuing the theme of Women's Suffrage, this edition's snippet describes the impact of the campaign on Rivington.

### **Extracts from The Manchester Courier, Wednesday July 9 and Friday, July 11 1913**

#### INCENDIARY'S MESSAGE

##### ESCAPE IN MOTOR CAR AFTER FIRING BUNGALOW

Sir William H. Lever, who has done a great deal for the Suffrage movement, is the latest victim of the militants, the beautiful bungalow he built some years ago on the summit of Rivington Pike being yesterday burnt to the ground.

The bungalow overlooked Lever Park, which Sir William had given to Bolton, and commanded a view of the Liverpool reservoirs and the Ribble Valley. Situated in gardens and grounds which were becoming famous for alpine plants, it had become a landmark just below Rivington Pike. There now can be seen the chimney stacks standing stark and bare to the skyline. All else has gone.

The flames were discovered soon after one o'clock in the morning by a waterworks watchman who roused Mr Adamson, the waterworks engineer. He promptly telephoned for the police and fire brigade, and himself motored to the spot. Arrived there he had first to rouse the residents of the three entrance lodges, and they, with some few who had been attracted, attached hose to the hydrant, but they were powerless. The bungalow and its contents were totally destroyed, involving damages reaching thousands of pounds. Pictures which covered the walls, an ancient tapestry

which hung in one room, and a collection of rare china and embroidery, of which Sir William has been a collector for years, were destroyed. Both Horwich and Chorley Fire Brigades refused to attend because the residence was out of their boundaries, but they would have been of little service as the fire had got complete hold before anyone arrived on the scene.

The incendiarism can be clearly traced to the suffragettes, as an ordinary portmanteau, found hanging on a railing fence near the entrance to the grounds, bore a label, "to Mr McKenna, London, via Horwich." Inside the portmanteau was a typewritten sheet on which the words: "To commemorate the King's visit to Liverpool. Votes for women. Be loyal to the King when the King is loyal to us. Votes for women." Another message found inside the portmanteau was: "if Sir William Lever had been as loyal to us and the Liberal party as Lancashire is being to its King this would not have happened.

There was also in the box a pair of lady's white kid gloves stained with blood, supposed to have been caused by a wound sustained whilst jumping over the iron railings or by the breaking of the windows of the bungalow. It is conjectured that the perpetrator got away by motorcar which it would be easy to do in this lonely district, as the bungalow is very isolated.

Sir William and Lady Lever were on Monday night members of the house party at Knowsley Park with the King and Queen. The residence was unoccupied, but was under the care of the occupiers of the entrance lodges, and they were asleep when the incendiary was at work. Much indignation is felt, as Sir W. Lever has often used the residence for his hospitality both to his rich and more humble neighbours in the locality.

## BUNGALOW FIRE CONFESSION

At Liverpool Police Court yesterday Mrs Rigby, the wife of a Preston doctor, who had given herself up in connection with the discovery of a bomb at the Royal Exchange, made the startling confession that it was she who set fire to Sir William Lever's bungalow at Rivington.

## MILITANT CONFESSES

### STARTED THE FIRE AT SIR WILLIAM LEVER'S HOUSE

Mrs Edith Rigby, the wife of a Preston doctor, made a remarkable confession from the dock at Liverpool Police Court yesterday after the fire at Sir W. H. Lever's house at Rivington.

In reply to a question as to whether she objected to remand until Monday, Mrs Rigby asked permission to make an explanatory statement. She said the placing of the bomb was her own planning, and only a minor official of the Women's Union was aware of her intention. She wished the public to realise how easy it was for women, when they were driven to these desperate measures, to get explosives and place them in public places. Had she been minded to do evil, she could easily have placed the bomb at the foot of the Nelson Monument, and a number of people round about would have been hurt.

Under the "Cat and Mouse" Law one of the greatest women of the land was going to be done to death. Could they point to any statesman who had so ably led a cause, enjoyed so much misery and suffering personally for his faith? If the Government were willing to kill that lady, they could kill her also, and when she was gone there would be a hundred better and more able women to take her place.

Mrs Rigby then proceeded to refer to the fire at Sir W. H. Lever's house at Rivington. Sir William was a vigorous man in all he did, she said, but he was an opponent of women's rights. Did he think his house at Rivington was more valuable to be shown to important people and used occasionally as a beacon lighted for King and country than to be used as a medium to show that women had an insupportable grievance? As a challenge to Sir William she would ask him whether he thought his house was more useful as it stood before or as it was now?

The Stipendiary: Apparently what you say has no bearing on the question of a remand

Mrs Rigby: It has this bearing- that I lighted the fire alone; that I did it alone.

A remand till Monday was ordered.

### **A Note from the Editor**

Don't forget that if you would like to help us reduce the cost of printing and posting the newsletter, you can opt to have an e-mail version rather than a paper copy. You can, of course, read this and past issues online at [www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk](http://www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk). If you are happy to do so, please contact me on [newsletter@rivingtonchapel.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@rivingtonchapel.org.uk), so that the mailing list can be amended. Chris and Lynne Houghton, who distribute the newsletters, would also be grateful to be kept informed if there are any other amendments that need to be made to the list. Their contact details can be found on the back page of the newsletter.

**Alison**

## Dates for your Diary

### Sunday Services at 2:15 PM

4 August	Rev Danny Crosby - Dunham Rd & Urmston Chapels
18 August	Aled Jones - Dunham Road Chapel
1 September	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
15 September	Rev Stephen Lingwood - Bank Street Chapel
6 October	Gordon and Veronica Walker - Bank Street Chapel
20 October	Rev Penny Johnson - Dean Row Chapel
3 November	Graham Pilborough - Padiham Chapel

### Flower Donors

4 August	Olive Fisher
18 August	Miss E Curwen
1 September	Joan Thursby
15 September	Elsie Kent
6 October	Vince and Isobel McCully
20 October	Muriel Jones
3 November	Roy Shepherd

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If you would like to arrange a ceremony at Rivington  
Chapel, please contact the Chapel Secretary.

Joan Thursby tel: (01204) 520264

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## Other Dates and Ceremonies

- Sun 18 Aug      Naming Ceremony - Annabelle Beatrice, daughter of Nick  
After Service      and Jo Clarke
- Sun 25 Aug      Naming Ceremony - Dylan Zack, son of Stephen Sherry and  
11:00 am          Jennie Sherry - Bell
- Sun 1 Sept        Congregational Committee Meeting  
After Service
- Sat 14 Sept      Late Summer Fair and Heritage Open Day  
11:00 - 4:00
- Wed 18 Sept     Chapel Trustees Meeting  
7:30 pm
- Sat 5 Oct         Rivington Pilgrimage  
12:30 pm          Service led by Marion Baker - Sheffield  
                          Toast to Civil & Religious Liberties by Neville Kenyon - Bury

Copy date for next issue:      1 October 2013

Issue date:                        20 October 2013

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                          BL5 3RS

telephone: (01942) 816569

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Please send your contributions electronically if possible to the email address above. For those without access to the internet I am still happy to receive handwritten copy,

## ***Your Committee***

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