

Rivington Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel



Founded 1662

Built 1703



Feb - Apr 2015

www.ukunitarians.org.uk/rivington

www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk

Chairman's Letter

Christmas seems but a dim memory now as we welcome in 2015. As usual our beloved Chapel was put to full use in the service of the local community as well as our loyal and committed congregation.

Sadly, we were called upon to hold a funeral service for Jean Coverdale on 18 December. She and her husband Stephen were married by Judith Crompton at our Chapel some years ago. It was the first funeral I have conducted and thankfully the family were satisfied with our ministrations.

On a happier note we were able to come to the aid of Hazel Deveux and David Johnstone who were joyously married at the Chapel on 2 January. They enjoyed a lovely bright and dry day and afterwards held their wedding reception in the tea rooms at the Chapel.

And what a Carol Service we had on 19 December; as usual we decorated the Chapel windows and this year the theme was 'Angels at Christmas'. We had biblical readings between the carols which showed how angels were fully involved in Jesus' arrival in the world, from months before with Zechariah in the temple to years after with Jesus being brought back from Egypt after Herod's death. Once again we were lucky enough to be on Santa's visiting list and he really wowed the boys and girls, whether they were two years old or fifty plus. Again we thank Jimmy for decorating the tree so exquisitely. Thanks also to our organist Roy for his steadfast service to the Chapel - what with playing all the carols we like to sing and for the other services, he has been kept pretty busy over the festive season. Also, Derian House sent a thank-you note to Joan Thursby and the Chapel for the hand crafted chocolate boxes that Joan made for the

children and for the mince pies we donated as they were surplus to our needs.

In November we were enchanted by the visit of the two young ladies who are responsible for 'Coffee4Craig', a street ministry working with the homeless in West and Central Manchester. Fie and Risha told our sympathetic congregation how they set up their ministry in November 2013 after Risha's brother, in his mid-thirties and once well-to-do, died a desolate death whilst living on the street and fighting heroin addiction.

Having met them while taking part in the Unitarian section of the 'Pride March' in Manchester this August, it seemed a good idea for the Chapel to make links with Fie and Risha, as they would be able to take the fresh produce from our harvest festival. This they did and, along with the non-perishable food, ensured its swift cooking and distribution to those in need. We were also able to deliver seven bin liners full of clothes to aid their endeavours.

If anyone has any warm clothing, coats etc. and wish to donate them, please contact Alison Whitaker, your newsletter editor, who has volunteered to be our principle link person with Fie and Risha at 'Coffee4Craig'.

By an odd quirk of fate Fie and Risha were able to give a little back to the Chapel too, by donating three boxes of chocolate bars to Anderton cubs and scouts. How? Because after the November service, and while Mark Scuse, from the Old Post Office, and I were loading a huge TV set he was donating to Fie and Risha's cause, I mentioned to them that the Anderton cubs and scouts would soon be planting a thousand daffodil bulbs on the green. These bulbs had recently been

received by Olive Fisher, a Chapel member and clerk to the Parish Council and as I'm their Group Scout Leader I was able to link them up. So, as they say, 'what goes around comes around'.

The Trustees, who are for the most part active Chapel members, have been very busy in the grounds and their last clean-up on 22 November produced no less than nine bulk bags of leaves and other green debris. Paul and Diane Fairclough went the extra mile and have planted what must be a barrow full of assorted bulbs in the Western part of the Chapel grave yard. These were kindly donated by Geoff Newey. So fingers crossed for a fine flowery addition to our grounds in 2015. From all at Chapel a big thank you to everyone who has worked so hard in the grounds this year. The Chapel looking tidy and well-kept makes it clear to visitors that it is an important and valued place and hopefully this encourages a greater respect from passers-by.

Finally just a quick reminder that the next Congregational Committee meeting will be after the service on 1 March, so if there is something you need to bring up, or if the work of the committee is something you would like to get involved with, then why not join us for this one and see what we do. This meeting will cover, amongst other things, our involvement with the Rivington Spring Festival.

And with that I wish you a Serene 2015. Amen

God bless, *Vince*

Chairman

Lay Person in Charge

Geoffrey Head

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death of Geoffrey Head on 5 November 2014. Geoffrey joined the Rivington Chapel Trust in 1988 having acted in an advisory capacity in the year prior to this. He remained a trustee until 2012.

His funeral was held at Hale Chapel, the spiritual home of his family, on 28 November. The service to celebrate his remarkable life was sensitively led by Rev Penny Johnson supported by readers Rev John Midgley and Judith Crompton. It was enriched by music from Peter Shaw.

In Cross St Chapel Manchester, there is a plaque to honour the services of Geoffrey in designing and creating the new building; it is said that he attended over two hundred meetings during its construction. This was typical of the commitment he showed to all things Unitarian: National, District and Local. He was President of the General Assembly in 1978 and Treasurer from 1979 to 1998. He played the major part in rescuing the finances of Manchester College Oxford. At District and local level he served in many roles including that of starting the Manchester Lay Preachers' Association, for he was of course a well-known preacher. His knowledge of the Movement was encyclopaedic; if we had doubts about some matter, we said, 'Oh, ask Geoffrey'.

However, Geoffrey managed to fit in many other careers. He had been a distinguished civil servant in charge of Customs and Excise at Manchester Airport and, after having been Controller of Distilleries in Scotland, he set up the V.A.T. Offices in Leeds. He attained high offices in Masonry and still found time to gain an Open University M.A. He was a great supporter of the Khasi Hills community, perhaps as a result of his RAF service in India.

One of the readings in the service was titled 'High Flight' written by a Spitfire pilot. However high Geoffrey flew, he always encouraged others to reach their potential, often showing flashes of humour

which endeared him to family and friends.

His more recent role was that of chief carer for Margaret whom he married 67 years ago and with whom he shared a love of red setters.

This event was a memorable experience for the many who had travelled from all parts of the country. As we sat in the ancient box pews we reflected on how many lives had been touched by the remarkable life of Geoffrey Head.

Dennis Crompton (with additional information – Ed)

Coffee4Craig

In his Chairman's letter Vince has written about meeting the organisers of Coffee4Craig and their subsequent visit to Chapel in November. Here is some more information about the organisation.

Coffee4Craig is a not-for-profit organisation which was set up to support and work with homeless people in Manchester and South Wales. Since it began, Coffee4Craig has helped many people every week to get off the streets and has given the regular volunteers opportunities to feed hundreds every weekend.

Coffee4Craig operates three static street kitchens in Manchester and a weekly welfare walk, supported by over 25 volunteers. They also support other projects, charities and statutory services, and are available 24 hours a day to deal with emergencies. They have been able to help a broad range of vulnerable people, some of whom have in turn become volunteers.

More information about the work of Coffee4Craig can be found on their website, www.coffee4craig.co.uk. As Vince has already mentioned, please contact me if you have any items you would like to donate.

Alison

Snippets from the Past

In the last issue we published a photograph which Paul Fairclough had found. Shortly after the newsletters had been distributed, I had a phone call from Roger Crompton, who used to be a member of the Chapel Trustees. Roger now lives in Surrey but still gets a copy of the newsletter in the post. He was able to identify some members of his family who appear in the photograph. These are his father, John William Richardson Crompton, his mother, Katherine Isabel Crompton and his grandmother, Theresa Crompton. John Crompton's remains were interred in the 1st niche in the Garden of Remembrance and Katherine was involved in the design of the Garden. Theresa Crompton was the wife of Andrews Crompton and lived at Rivington Hall. Many thanks to Roger for this interesting information.

If anyone else can identify any of the people in the picture, or knows more about when it was taken, please get in touch. An annotated version of the photograph can be seen on the Chapel website, www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk , which will be updated as and when more information is available.

If anyone has any other old photographs of past events at Rivington Chapel that they think would be interesting to readers of the newsletter, please let me know.

Alison

How is it that one careless match can start a forest fire, but it takes a whole box to light a campfire?

Contributed by **Joan Thursby**

2015 Calendar

Sun 19 April	Congregational AGM
Sat 2 May	Open day in support of Rivington Spring Festival
Sun 17 May	Anniversary Sermons taken by Rev Nicky Jenkins, Chorlton Chapel
Sun 7 June	Strawberry Tea
Sat 12 Sept	Late Summer Fair/Heritage Open Day
Sun 20 Dec	Christmas Carol Service

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. If you are happy to do so, please contact me on newsletter@rivingtonchapel.org.uk, so that the mailing list can be amended. Chris and Lynne Haighton, 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

1 February	Peter Sampson - Lancaster
15 February	Rev Stephen Lingwood - Bank Street Chapel
1 March	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
15 March	Veronica & Gordon Walker - Bank Street Chapel
5 April	Chrissie Wilkie - Dean Row Chapel
19 April	Geoff Newey - Rivington Chapel
3 May	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel

Flower Donors

1 February	Alison Whitaker and Peter Bearon
15 February	Iris Wharton
1 March	Muriel Jones
15 March	Joan Thursby
5 April	Olive Mayor
19 April	Olive Fisher
3 May	Jaqueline Dagnall

Other Dates and Ceremonies

Sun 1 March Congregational Committee Meeting
After Service

Thur 19 March Chapel Trustees AGM
7:30 pm

Sun 19 April Chapel Congregational AGM
After Service

Sat 2 May Chapel Open Day - Rivington Village Festival
11:00 am - 4:00 pm

If you would like to arrange a ceremony at Rivington

Chapel, please contact

Joan Thursby tel: 01204 520264

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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,

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