

Rivington Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel



Founded 1662

Built 1703

"Here let no man a stranger be"



May - July 2013

www.ukunitarians.org.uk/rivington

www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk

Chairman's Letter

We're all in a tiz at home right now, and it's all because of the last editor of this newsletter, Isobel. We are off to visit her in California in the first half of April. She has nearly finished a year at Berkley in California where she is studying 'feminism and gender studies', (then she has a final year at Leeds on her return). Isobel sends you all her love and best wishes.

If I could give you the Chairman's report from the AGM, it might be a useful summary of the year's events, for those unable to attend.

Here goes;

"It was a very varied year with some unusual ups and downs that could be listed under their own headings.

Saddest things: Losing Joan Holding and Judith Oldham.

Funniest: Peter galloping down the aisle at the One Accord Christmas Concert.

Most welcome: The resurfaced road leading up to the Chapel.

Most unexpected: Me being asked by the Congregational Committee to be 'Lay Leader'

Most rehearsed: The brilliant 'Shepherds Play' produced by Dennis Crompton and performed by Chris Oldham, Dennis, Muriel and Leighton Jones, Geoff Newey, Frank Ascroft and Linda Green.

Most deserved: The token of gratitude from the congregation given to John Patefield in the form of an ornate walking staff and flowers for Olive Mayor.

Most dedicated: The work of Joan Thursby as Secretary and Registrar and Frank Ascroft as Treasurer and Chapel Keeper.

Most relieved: Judith Crompton's successful knee operation.

Most frustrating: Not being able to meet in open forum at Chapel with Shammi Webster and Alex Bradley to formalise arrangements for a student pastorship at the Chapel. This had been arranged by me, at great effort, for Tues 27 May 2012, when all could be present, but was cancelled at Alex's and Shammi's request. During this meeting duties and fees were to be agreed.

Second most frustrating: Rivington Top Barn being double booked and thereby preventing our Pilgrimage being held in the same year as the 350th Anniversary of the Great Ejection. The venue had been firmly booked in 2009 when Judith Crompton and myself were present at a meeting with Kevin Salmon. They have apologised profusely. The Pilgrimage will now be held this year on Saturday 5 October.

Most forward looking: Investigating options for the on-going repository for ashes, as our columbarium is fast becoming replete. I am, as a Chapel Trustee, looking into answers to this situation, where a future and sustained income can be returned to the Chapel, for a sensible and fully planned outlay at the present.

Most child friendly: A talk we hosted for the children of Rivington Primary School. Their questions were so perceptive and incisive. Tom the dog was here also and was a big hit; certainly I appreciated his presence as an ice breaker. This Chapel was able to speak for itself on many levels. Unitarian ideals of freedom of choice and expression figured strongly and a person's individuality expressed through non-conformist worship also came out. Joan Holding's sally was a source of fun as I asked them to guess its name. We all agreed on their January visit that this Chapel is the place to come if you want 'Peace' and if you want to be cool or cold.

Most safe: The Safeguarding course I attended in October 2012, which means we now fall under the aegis of the Unitarian corpus regarding this imperative precaution in the unhappy event of allegations, whether substantial or vexatious, concerning people who are vulnerable, which, in most cases, means children, the elderly or those with learning difficulties. We have a certificate of my attendance which is kept on file.

Most patriotic: The Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations instigated and organised by Joan Holding, Joan Thursby, Iris Wharton, Muriel and Leighton Jones.

Most family-centred: Judith and Dennis' Golden Wedding celebration which was well attended by their family members and, naturally, fully supported by Chapel members.

Most delicious: The strawberry tea, donated by Roy Shepherd. Plans are afoot for a remarkable event on 2 June 2013 which is when this years strawberry tea will follow the service taken by Rev Jane Barraclough.

Also delicious: Last year's Anniversary Dinner, which was held at the Yew Tree Restaurant, Anglezarke. This was well attended, and I think the Rev Stephen Lingwood enjoyed his dinner, if his plate was anything to go by. This year's Anniversary Service will be taken by Rev. Bill Darlison, a very highly regarded Unitarian, famed for his widely published story writing.

Most eye-opening; The excellent and superbly delivered service which we were all delighted to witness from Geoff Newey. Geoff knows he is welcome to do this again, any time he wants to. We look forward to this.

Most regretful: I apologise in advance for anyone omitted; it was an unintentional oversight, I assure you.

LAY LEADER.

At the last congregational committee meeting on 17 February, completely unknown to me beforehand, it was proposed that I become Lay Leader of the Chapel.

It was said that as I was doing all the relevant tasks anyway, some kind of official recognition would be desirable.

As I said, it was out of the blue, but I agreed to take this on.

Since then I have given it a great deal of thought and think that it would be a natural progression for the Chapel and to some extent for me. It would I think spur me on to greater efforts.

I would continue much in the same way, doing what I can, as best as I can. Such things as the number of services I do would stay the same especially as we enjoy our visiting pastors so much; variety is the spice of life after all. I would continue as pulpit supply secretary, and still perform rites of passage. Any fees arising would also remain the same. In answer to Joan Thursby's humorous question in committee, 'No, you certainly won't have to curtsey or doff your cap to me!' I would also, I'm sure, need to attend further training for various things. So far I have been on a lot of courses, the most major being Lay Leader Foundation Course in 2006 with Dawn Buckle. I was on the Safeguarding course at the end of last year, I regularly attend MDA committee meetings, as many MDA events as I can, and intend to get to the GA next year. As far as 3rd party qualifications go, I graduated from the Department of Theology at Manchester University in 1982 (my ermine matches that of Rev. Brenda Catherall

from Chowbent who did a similar degree, in 1986 I think).

I have made some enquiries and it may be that the GA's idea of a Lay Leader and our idea of a Lay Leader may differ somewhat. This being said, I'm confident they will come round to our way of thinking. Joking apart, in case they don't, I will be making every effort possible to be in full compliance with their procedures.

It may be that my role would be seen by them as *Ex Officio*. Thank you, I accept."

That was the Chairman's report at the AGM. The Congregational Committee thought that the AGM on 3 March would be an ideal opportunity to put this matter to the vote. Peter Bearon thought it was a bit sudden and that the matter should be discussed and voted on when more people would be present. In order for this matter to be publicised through the newsletter, Sunday 19 May was lit upon for this purpose. However this is Anniversary Sunday, and in order to best host our visiting speaker Bill Darlison, from Wakefield, this is not ideal. For this reason the committee has decided it is better to discuss the role of Lay Leader after the service on 7 July. In fact, the title 'Lay Leader' is a misnomer; the sort of role I carry out now, is described as 'Lay Person in Charge'. A Lay Leader, as Judith Crompton was, now has connotations of ministry, partial stipends and a good deal of outside influence. Not exactly in the interests of autonomy for our congregation. Since the AGM I have been accepted as a member of UALM (Unitarian Association of Lay Ministry, which incorporates the Unitarian Lay Preachers' Association) and have been accepted onto the MDA executive committee.

OTHER MATTERS

After the service on 21 April there will be a meeting to discuss our involvement in the proceedings for the Rivington Spring Festival on 4 May. On this occasion we generally put forward our publications and any crafts and produce we can muster. Last year we had quite a few visitors, so we were able to show off our lovely Chapel and we were fully involved in the whole event. If you would like to get involved please come to the meeting.

The Anniversary Meal on 19 May has been booked at the Yew Tree, the same venue as last year. There is a list on the notice board at the back of the Chapel for those who wish to come to the meal, which has been booked for 5:00 pm. This should give our visiting preacher a chance to get home in daylight. I will be able to get a pre-order menu to circulate when I return from California.

The Service on 2 June celebrating of the life of the Suffragette Emily Davison is certainly starting to take shape. Frocks and parasols, purple sashes, boaters and striped blazers seem to be the order of the day. This is very much Iris's brain child and she has been doing some very extensive research. Come along and join with us for what should prove to be a really memorable day.

Now I really must get packed or the plane will be taking off without me.

God Bless Everyone

Vince

Notice of a Special Meeting of the Congregation

Sunday 7 July 2013.

As mentioned in the chairman's letter, at the Chapel AGM on Sunday 3 March the congregational committee proposed that Vince McCully should be appointed Lay Leader. The committee felt that, as Vince was effectively undertaking this role, he should be formally recognised for the work he has been doing.

As there were very few members of the congregation present at the AGM, and as no previous notice had been given that this appointment was being considered, it was decided that a special meeting should be arranged to discuss:

- Whether the congregation want to appoint a Lay Leader
- If so, who that person should be

This meeting was initially arranged for Sunday 19 May 2013 immediately after the Anniversary Service. Since then the committee has decided that a better date for this meeting is Sunday 7 July.

In his letter, Vince refers to the terms 'Lay Leader' and 'Lay Person in Charge'. In order to clarify these terms the following are the descriptions of the various lay ministry roles as set out on the Unitarian Association of Lay Ministry web page:

Worship Leader: this is someone who leads services, usually in their own or neighbouring congregations, but who does not have any GA-recognised qualifications.

Lay Worship Leader (formerly Lay Preacher): this is someone who leads services, usually in their own or neighbouring congregations, who has successfully completed either the GA's Worship Studies Course, or its predecessor, the Certificate of

Lay Preaching and the Conduct of Worship (CLPCW).

Lay Person in Charge: this is someone who is appointed to have pastoral oversight by the congregation which they serve.

Lay Leader: this is someone who has pastoral oversight of the congregation which they serve, and who has also been recognised as a Lay Leader by the GA's Interview Panel. They will usually have done some training, either at Harris Manchester College Oxford, or Unitarian College Manchester.

Lay Pastor: this is someone who is like a minister, in that they have gone through a recognised period of training, either at Harris Manchester College Oxford, or Unitarian College Manchester, and have been admitted to the GA Roll of Ministers and Lay Pastors, but who generally only works part-time for their congregation.

This is a very important decision for the congregation to make, and it is important that as many members as possible should be present. Please put Sunday 7 July 2013 in your diaries.

Chapel Flowers

Joan Thursby reports that all the gaps in the flower donor rota have now been filled, so thank you to those who have agreed to join the list.

Following discussion at the recent Congregational AGM, Joan will be grateful if you would let her know what you would prefer to happen to the flowers you have donated at the end of the service. They can be left in the Chapel, as is usually the case at the moment, or they could, for example, be sent to someone who is ill or celebrating a special event.

Norman Hough

On Friday 30 November 2012, a Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Norman Hough, conducted by Rev John Hopkins, was held at the Chapel and attended by family, relatives and friends. Norman was a lifelong member of Rivington Chapel and his service and commitment will be sadly missed. He was Chairman and Treasurer of the Trustees for many years and was involved in the project supported by English Heritage for the restoration of the fabric of the Chapel.

Norman spent his childhood in Rivington and even in his early years he appreciated the beauty of the village and surrounding countryside. Following his retirement Norman and Mary enjoyed their home and garden, walking in the surrounding area with their Labrador dogs and active involvement with the Rivington Bowling Club. Norman was also a member of the Rotary Club of Horwich and in fulfilling his service of the objects of Rotary, he made many friends from other clubs including the Isle of Man, which he and Mary visited on many occasions.

His commitment to the Chapel, in both an advisory and practical capacity over many years, was exceptional. He was often seen working in the Chapel grounds and for many years took on the responsibility for the management and maintenance of the Garden of Rest. Throughout his 92 years, Norman's dedication to the Chapel has been unique.

John Patefield

Trustees Matters

The trustees held a meeting on Wednesday 13 March. We welcomed two new trustees; Paul Fairclough and Lynn Greenwell. Lynn has also agreed to take on the role of secretary, so together with myself as chairman and Chris Haighton as treasurer, we are back to having a full complement of officers.

We are hoping to remove the rhododendrons in the near future and once these have gone, we are looking into the possibility of planting a tree in memory of Joan Holding.

Vince and Leighton had looked into the possibilities for building new walls to contain more niches for future interment of ashes. However, it was decided that the cost of this was too high in the present financial climate and we need to concentrate on the overall maintenance of the chapel. We will, however, be looking into the possibility of having ground interments of ashes once the remaining niches are full.

We have decided not to pursue an update of the trust constitution, as the turnover is too low for the Charity Commissioners to consider reviewing it.

We had quite a lot of expenditure in 2012 with repairs needed to the lead in the valley and by the bell tower and the pruning and removal of trees. However, despite the poor economic climate, our investments have performed reasonably well, and these offset the expenditure and we finished the year 1% up on 2011.

Peter Bearon
Chairman

trustchair@rivingtonchapel.org.uk

Opening the Chapel to the Public

Over the last couple of years, the number of people using the Chapel for weddings and naming ceremonies has declined significantly. At the AGM, there was some discussion about how more people could be attracted into the Chapel so that they could see what an ideal venue it is. It was suggested that, on some of the Sundays when there is a service in the afternoon, that the Chapel could be opened up between 12:00 and 2:00 pm so that passers-by could come in and have a look round. Some might even decide to stay on for the service. Vince will start the ball rolling in May, and Alison and Peter will do Sunday 2 June. If there is anyone else who would be willing to take a turn and come to Chapel a bit earlier than usual, please let the committee know.

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 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

Come and join us on a Summer Afternoon

Sunday 2 June 2013

2:15 pm

The service will be in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the suffragette Emily Wilding Davison who died under King George V's horse at the 1913 Epsom Derby.

The service will be taken by Rev Jane Barraclough.

After the service, you are invited to stay and join us in a glass of Buck's Fizz accompanied by strawberries and cream.

Dress Code (optional)

Ladies: black skirt, white blouse, hat or straw boater

Gentlemen: striped blazer, light grey or white trousers

Dates for your Diary

Sunday Services at 2:15 PM

5 May	Dr Maria Curtis - student at Bank Street Chapel
19 May	Rev Bill Darlison - Wakefield Anniversary Sermons
2 June	Rev Jane Barraclough - Cross Street Chapel Strawberry Tea
16 June	Dr Irvine Delamore
7 July	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
21 July	Joyce Ashworth - Rochdale Chapel
4 August	Rev Danny Crosby - Dunham Rd & Urmston Chapels

Flower Donors

5 May	Jacqueline Dagnall
19 May	Mrs Jones
2 June	Judith Crompton
16 June	Jo Clark
7 July	Frank Ascroft
21 July	Joan Thursby
4 August	Olive Fisher

Other Dates and Ceremonies

Sat 4 May	Rivington Spring Festival & Chapel Open Day
Sun 19 May Evening	Anniversary congregational meal at The Yew Tree, Anglezarke, 5:00 pm
Sun 2 June 2:15 pm	Service to commemorate Emily Davison, followed by Strawberry Tea
Sun 7 July After Service	Congregational Meeting

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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send to: Alison Whitaker, 14 Church Street, Westhoughton, Bolton,
BL5 3RS

telephone: (01942) 816569

email: newsletter@rivingtonchapel.org.uk

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

Chairman & Pulpit Supply Secretary	Vince McCully 20 Thirlmere Close, Anderton Lancashire, PR6 9QD 01257 483733 email: vinmcul@hotmail.co.uk
Secretary & Flower Rota	Joan Thursby 5 Lovat Road, Bolton, BL2 6LP 01204 520264
Treasurer & Chapel Keeper	Frank Ascroft 13a Highfield Road North, Adlington, Lancashire, PR6 9RN 01257 483635
Organist	Roy Shepherd MGI; MNMSCM 20 Shillingston Close, Harwood, BL2 3PD 01204 394061 email: roy.shepherd@yahoo.co.uk
Publicity Officer	Dennis Crompton Rossett Gill, 48 Redcar Road, Smithills, Bolton, BL1 6LL 01204 841685 email: dennisfcrompton@btinternet.com
Other Committee Members	Jacqueline Dagnall 01204 691833 Leighton & Muriel Jones 01257 232564 Geoff Newey 07570 876710

Other Contact Details

Newsletter Editor	Alison Whitaker 14 Church Street, Westhoughton, Bolton, BL5 3RS 01942 816569 email: newsletter@rivingtonchapel.org.uk
Newsletter Distribution	Lynne & Chris Haighton 105 Albert Road West, Heaton, Bolton, BL1 5ED 01204 841678 email: chris.haighton@virgin.net