

# Rivington Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel



Founded 1662

Built 1703

*"Here let no man a stranger be"*



May - July 2015

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

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



## Chairman's Letter

This Chairman's letter is an edited version of my report for the Congregational AGM, held after the service on Sunday 19 April. It also covers my activities as Lay Person in Charge.

We have had a busy and very varied year and not so long after the last AGM, on Midsummer's Eve, we held a truly memorable event in the tea rooms when we performed one of Chris Martin's excellent murder mystery plays. I refer, of course, to "Who killed the Vicar?". It was simply fantastic to see this Chapel's members put on such an entertaining spectacle, due in no small part to Chris's kind and patient nurturing of us. Jayne and the tea room staff could not have been more helpful in letting us do many hours of rehearsals and then providing refreshments on their night off. Maxine Porch and Tanya Smalley, from the nearby village of Adlington, kindly helped too by joining the cast. It was another event done in conjunction with Chorley Lions, and on this occasion they provided great hampers for the raffle. The proceeds were split 50/50 between them and the Chapel.

In August I joined the Unitarian section of the "Pride March" in Manchester, wearing the T shirt with "Unitarians celebrate Diversity" written on it. Quite an event, an amazing atmosphere, you really ought to consider joining us and making a physical statement for freedom of expression, if nothing else.

The Late Summer Fair on 13 September was aided by lovely weather and was a great occasion all round. A real atmosphere of fellowship pervaded and a good time was had by all. Certainly Frank, our treasurer, was happy because we made an amazing £450.

On 28 September we were visited by Kathy Denton's Sunday School pupils from Horwich Moor Methodist Church. They were very enthusiastic visitors and after we held a shortened Unitarian service, including the Chalice lighting, readings and stories about good deeds, they were able to challenge the parents to find out who could complete Geoff Newey's Chapel quiz the fastest. The children won – of course.

In November we were enchanted by the visit of the two young ladies whom I met on the Pride March. They are responsible for running 'Coffee4Craig', a street ministry working with the homeless in West and Central Manchester and Leigh. 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.

Also in November the Chapel happily interacted with Anderton Scout Group and Rivington Parish in the planting of some thousand daffodil bulbs on the village green. In addition, Paul and Diane Fairclough have planted a barrow full of assorted bulbs, which were kindly donated by Geoff Newey, in the western part of the Chapel grave yard. 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 very clear to visitors that it is an important and valued place to someone and hopefully this encourages a greater respect for this special place from passers-by.

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. Once again Father Christmas visited 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. 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.

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 Deve-reux and David Johnstone who were joyously married at the Chapel on 2 January. It was rather poignant as David's cancer condition had returned and trying times lay ahead. Once more Hazel would nurse him, as he says she is his stalwart. They enjoyed a lovely bright and dry day and afterwards held their wedding reception in the tea rooms at the Chapel.

In July 2014 we had a first at the Chapel when the marriage of Ynry and Chelsea Llwyd was conducted in both English and Welsh (Cymraeg). I was aided by Rev. Wayne Roberts, the Presbyterian Minister at Prion in Denbighshire, who did the Welsh bits. One highlight was when we spoke the Our Father in English and Welsh simultaneously; remarkably we all finished at exactly the same time.

A new addition to our services when I am the preacher is 'Candles of

sharing'. This is where we all have an opportunity to mention a subject which causes us joy or concern and which we feel can be shared and prayed for as a community.

We have seen some new preachers lead worship and we have loved having them with us; we have been delighted by their inspiring services. In the coming year there a few more new faces for us and I'm sure we will be similarly enthralled by what they have to say. This is not to say we have not fully enjoyed our regular visiting preachers whom we value most highly.

I have been attending the MDA council meetings on your behalf for some years now. This is one way that I am able to try as much as possible to keep us plugged into the wider Unitarian world. It is also helps us to keep in contact with some of our visiting preachers. However, it is probably high time I attended at the General Assembly (GA) events and fully intend to get there in 2016. This last year I also became an executive member of the MDA, attending meetings where quite detailed matters are discussed, which are often financial in nature.

Having lost Rivington Barn as our Pilgrimage venue, we have been continually addressing the issue at our committee meetings and have discussed a number of possibilities (see AGM report below - Ed).

We have a vacancy for a Congregational Secretary. Normally the duties involve taking minutes and sending and receiving correspondence. Jo Clark was appointed as secretary at last year's AGM, but due to family and work commitments she has had to resign. Joan Thursby, from whom she had taken over, then very kindly covered for us. However Joan is no longer able to continue. And so again we must thank Joan profusely for all her very valued help. Joan is also giving

up her role as Wedding and Naming Ceremony Coordinator and so that has created a further vacancy. (See AGM report below – Ed.)

Amen & God bless, *Vince*  
Chairman  
Lay Person in Charge

### **AGM report**

As both Joan Thursby and Jo Clark have resigned from the Congregational Committee, there is a vacancy for the post of Secretary. There were no nominations at the meeting, so it was decided that the Congregational Committee should be empowered to appoint a Secretary following further discussions. Joan was asked to provide a list of the duties of the Secretary so that the Committee can decide how these can best be carried out in the future.

Alison Whitaker agreed to take over the organisation of the Flower Donor Rota.

Mary Horrocks has agreed to carry out the administrative side of the role of Wedding and Naming Ceremony Coordinator. The best way to cover the other aspects of the role will be discussed by the Committee.

As he has attended the relevant training course, Frank Ascroft will undertake the Registrar's duties for the time being, or a Registrar from Chorley will be asked to attend.

Various options for an alternative venue to hold the Pilgrimage were suggested. These will be considered further by the Committee.

Over the summer, the Chapel will again be open for visitors on Sundays before service. Peter and Alison will open up on Sunday 3 May.

There will be a rota on the notice board in Chapel for anyone else who would like to help with this.

The date for the next AGM will be Sunday 20 March 2016.

### **Congregational Meal**

The Congregational meal at the Yew Tree Inn, Heath Charnock will follow the Anniversary Service on Sunday 17 May at 4:00 pm. If you would like to go, please sign the sheet on the Chapel notice board, or contact Vince McCully on 01257 483733. There is also a sample menu on display.

### **New Chapel Merchandise**

Thanks are due to Michael Hough who has been very busy producing some new booklets which will be on sale in the Chapel and the Village Tearooms. Already available is 'Rivington Chapel Memorial Inscriptions' which is a record of the memorial inscriptions in the Chapel grounds which Michael has transcribed. Just back from the publisher is 'Rivington Chapel Trustees Minutes, August 1859 to March 1955'. A third booklet, 'Rivington Chapel Pew Rents' is still being researched.

Michael has also organised the reproduction of some old photographs of the Chapel in postcard format.

Prices are as follows:	Rivington Chapel Memorial Inscriptions	£2.50
	Rivington Chapel Trustees Minutes	£3.00
	Postcards (set of 8)	£1.50

If you would like to buy any of these items, but are unable to visit the Chapel, they are available directly from Michael (plus the cost of postage and packing). Please contact him on 0113 267 7298.

## **Trustees Matters**

The trustees held their Annual General Meeting in March. In addition to the usual matters of maintenance of the Chapel and grounds, two items arose of which Chapel members should be aware.

Firstly, I'm sure that many of you will have noticed that the Garden of Remembrance has been particularly wet over the winter period. Although it has been damp for quite some time, we have not experienced the flooding that occurred this winter. The trustees are therefore arranging for the land drains to be cleared out or replaced as necessary. Once this has been done, the ground should dry out, although this may take some time.

Secondly, following a recent encounter between Michael Hough and a family who were scattering ashes in the graveyard, there was some discussion on what the Chapel's policy on scattering ashes should be. It was felt that the unofficial scattering of ashes should be discouraged. However, if any family wishes to scatter ashes, this can be done 'officially' in the Garden of Remembrance and arranged through the Congregational Committee. There is already a Book of Remembrance in which the name of the deceased can be recorded if the family wishes.

Just before going to press, I was told that our current gardeners have had to hand in their notice for personal reasons. If anyone knows of a suitable gardener, or firm of gardeners, that would be willing to take on the chapel grounds please can they let me know.

**Peter Bearon**  
**Chairman, Rivington Chapel Trustees**

A poem by Murray Lachlan Young which was written during a broadcast of the Radio4 programme 'Saturday Live' in December 2013.

## **Nothing**

If beyond everything there is nothing  
And nothing knows nothing of things  
And nothing knows nothing of nothing  
Then everything's everything

And for every thing to be something  
First something must say things are things  
For without a thing, to decide things are things  
Tell me how can a thing be a thing?

For when looking at things we can see they are things  
So we know and we say they are things  
For they look like a thing and they act like a thing  
So of course then they must be the thing.

But when something says something is nothing  
Then nothing is known by a thing  
So the thing that said something is nothing  
Makes nothing a thing that's something

If beyond everything there is nothing  
And nothing knows nothing of things  
And something knows something of nothing  
Can nothing not, not be a thing?

## Unitarians Abroad

For the cover photo this issue, we've gone somewhat further afield than usual. A chance conversation earlier this year with Judith Crompton brought it to our attention that there is a Unitarian Church in Copenhagen. So, we decided to try and visit the church during a brief stay in Copenhagen in March.

The Danish Unitarian Church was founded in 1900 and the church building was completed in 1927. Nina Grieg, the wife of the Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg, moved back to Copenhagen following his death. She was involved in raising funds for the construction of the building and also donated most of the money for the Church's organ.

From the Church's website ([www.unitarerne.dk](http://www.unitarerne.dk)) we found out that, like at Rivington, services take place on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday afternoons of the month. This fitted in with the dates of our stay, so on Sunday 15 March we took a short bus ride to Dag Hammarskjölds Allé in time for the service at 2:00 p.m.

The service was taken by Lene Shoemaker who has been vice president of the fellowship since 1995. Although it was all in Danish, the format of hymns, readings, music and an address was very familiar. A nice touch was the passing of the lighted chalice from one person to another until it had circulated the whole congregation. Musical accompaniment was provided on grand piano and flute.

After the service we were invited to join the congregation in the basement meeting room for their customary get together over bread and cheese, coffee (or tea) and cake.

**Peter & Alison**

Some words written by Tilly Pugh for a time capsule that was buried in November 2012 under the Iron Age roundhouse at the Nightingale Centre in Great Hucklow.

I wish I'd picked more flowers.

I wish I'd laughed more.

I wish I'd worried less.

I wish I'd loved more and sung and danced more.

But the life I've lived has been a good one.

### **Coffee4Craig**

We are continuing to support Coffee4Craig, a not-for-profit organisation which was set up to support and work with homeless people in Manchester and South Wales.

In Manchester, Coffee4Craig operates three static street kitchens 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](http://www.coffee4craig.co.uk) . Please contact me if you have any items you would like to donate.

**Alison**

## **2015 Calendar**

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**

You will be receiving your copy of this edition of the newsletter slightly later than usual, as it was decided to delay publication so that it could include a report on the AGM. The date of the meeting had been moved to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in April to avoid Easter Sunday. As you will see from the report, the meeting dealt with some important issues which it was felt should be brought to everyone's attention sooner rather than later.

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 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.

## Dates for your Diary

### Sunday Services at 2:15 PM

3 May	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
17 May	Anniversary Sermons Rev Nicky Jenkins - Chorlton Chapel
7 June	Rev Alex Bradley - Norcliffe Chapel, Styal
21 June	Rev Danny Crosby - Urmston and Altrincham Chapels
5 July	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
19 July	No Service - Chapel open for visitors (Ironman event)
2 August	Rev Stephen Lingwood - Bank Street Chapel

### Flower Donors

3 May	Jaqueline Dagnall
17 May	Muriel Jones
7 June	Judith Crompton
21 June	Jo Clark
5 July	Frank Ascroft
19 July	Joan Thursby
2 August	Olive Fisher

## Other Dates and Ceremonies

Sat 2 May 2:00 pm	Wedding - Lisa Berry and Philip James Conducted by Vince McCully
Sun 17 May 4:00 pm	Chapel Congregational Meal Yew Tree Inn, Heath Charnock
Sun 7 June After Service	Strawberry Tea
Tue 9 June 2:00 pm	Wedding - Fiona Williams and Karl Eccles Conducted by Vince McCully

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If you would like to arrange a ceremony at Rivington  
Chapel, please contact  
Mary Horrocks tel:01204 493757

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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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