

Rivington Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel



Founded 1662

Built 1703

"Here set no man a stranger be"



May - Jul 2016

www.ukunitarians.org.uk/rivington

www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk

Lay Person in Charge's Letter

In February I made a trip into Manchester in a car replete with eleven bin bags full of clothes which my neighbours had been clearing out. On speaking to Fie and Risha at Coffee4Craig they directed me to Karen at the Pankhurst Centre (behind MRI). She greatly appreciated the clothes and also the donation Mark and Helen from the Old Post Office in Rivington Village had given to me to pass on to a worthy cause.

We were all sad to hear of our organist Roy's misfortune which rendered him not only bed bound, but hospital bound just before Christmas, throughout the festivities and right into the New Year. Fortunately, Roy has now been able to return to play for us and long may he continue to do so.

On matters musical, we are indebted to the Bennett Singers (a community choir under the leadership of Jan Turner) who sang four pieces for us during our service on Sunday 3 January 2016. They were; Joy to the World, The Coventry Carol, Carol to the Russian Children and In The Bleak Midwinter. And wasn't it wonderful when at the end 'One Accord' replied by leading us through their 'New Year Carol'. Truly a most rewarding experience and a real privilege to have witnessed, well worth braving the treacherous elements and floods for.

Our pulpit has been filled with great preachers this year, which goes to show the wealth of spirituality, ability and talent that the Unitarian and Free Christian movement has at its disposal. I hope to be able to continue feeding us all on this stimulating and rewarding diet of thoughtful, well-considered services. We have seen many established and familiar faces, such as Rev Penny Johnson and Graham Pilborough; we have also seen a number of new faces in our pulpit

such as Rev Ann Peart and Peter Sampson. Perhaps the most outstanding was Rev Bob Janis-Dillon. For those who missed him in February, he will be back with us for the Pilgrimage.

I first met Rev Bob at Luther King House when he was there for their AGM and the talk by Lay Pastor Ralph Catts (from Hull) on the Findhorn Foundation up in Nairn, which is a New Age Commune (I once stayed there for a short time when I was a student in 1981).

I will be back at Luther King House for the weekend at the end of May for a "Spiritual Awareness" Course.

I was planning to attend the General Assembly conferences at the NEC in Birmingham from 31 March - 2 April and would have been able to engage avidly with the Unitarian dynamic to be found there. However, family circumstances have been somewhat demanding this past month and it is best that I stay local for the foreseeable future. I do intend to attend next year though.

We have a wedding and two naming ceremonies booked in for this year and can realistically hope for more. We also have a wedding booked in for September 2017 for young William Salmon and his fiancée Tori from Rivington Hall. On Thursday 17 March a funeral was held here for Joanna Roscoe for which they used their own celebrant and our organist.

One wedding we were unable to get was for my karate sensei Billy Higgins and his wife-to-be Kat Williams. They liked the Chapel very much but are opting for Leigh Sports Village, to accommodate the numbers, though they want me to take the service.

The Manchester Evening News have recently published a 12-page wedding supplement, which includes a competition to win a £25,000 wedding at Worsley Park Marriott Hotel and Country Club.

There are over 300 couples in it. So, at least we know people are still getting married, but in the strangest of places.

I attend all the MDA Council and Executive meetings that I am able to so that I can keep abreast of events and fly the flag for this much loved place of simple beauty.

Wishing you all every blessing I remain yours sincerely

Vince

Ex - Chairman's Letter

At our AGM on Sunday 20 March constitutional matters raised at the previous AGM were finally concluded. The result is that we now have a brand new Chairman. Alison Whitaker was voted in as our new Chairman.

On the day I was fortunate to be the first to congratulate Alison on taking on this role and I would now like to do so again. I am sure that I speak for everyone in wishing Alison every possible success as our new Chairman. I am certain that our small and dedicated community will grow from strength to strength over the coming years with Alison's energy and steady hand on the rudder.

We have had another eventful year and fund raising has gone really well. There was the usual and the unusual, the joyous and the tragic. On the usual side of things our Late Summer Fair in September was a great day of fellowship and industry. We raised £480, not so surprising given the effort the whole congregation put in, and as we team up with Heritage Open Day on that day, we are already booked into their list of events for 2016.

Earlier in September, Peter and Alison hosted the West Gallery Singing Day which raised nearly £200; a great effort and I'm sure a won-

derful environment for the members of the three choirs to gather together in.

We also teamed up with the Chorley Lions for a musical extravaganza on Friday 4 December and with the kind services of Craig Porch and the Bay Horse acoustic society, not to mention some excellent mulled cider, we had another success on our hands. The event raised £307 which was split 50/50 with the Lions.

Less usual was the Farmers Market at the Bay Horse on Saturday 5 December. This was more of a craft fair really, which indeed suited our efforts nicely as, again with tremendous support from our congregation, we were able to cover most tastes and raised a surprising sum of £150.

All pretty joyous so far; however, the prolonged severe rains we have endured had the inevitable effect of flooding the countryside and poor old Croston copped it again. Linda and John told us about this and the collection we took on Sunday 3 January was added to the Bay Horse craft fair money so that we could donate £270 to their fighting fund. Not bad for a little Chapel in the hills.

Planning for the Rivington Pilgrimage, scheduled for Saturday 24 September 2016 has been coming along steadily and I am happy to report that;

i/ Alison has the venue booked, Rivington Village Hall.

ii/ Karl and Fie at the Bay Horse have agreed to attend to the catering for us.

iii/ Judith has engaged the services of Dot Hewerdine to propose the toast to civil and religious liberties.

iv/ I have been able to book Rev Bob Janis-Dillon, who recently wowed us with an excellent service, to take the service on that day.

A Rites of Passage Secretary has been appointed by the committee and Mary Horrocks has assumed that role. Mary has been an asset to us and has been most helpful to all enquirers for our services.

On Sunday 15 November 2015 Rev Ann Peart took our service and afterwards, quite by chance, we discussed the remnants of our Chapel library that have been languishing, pretty much unloved, on the stage by the organ. These books, she was swift to tell us, would be highly prized and much welcomed (especially for their Unitarian Provenance) in the newly revamped Gaskell Library in Manchester, where they are avidly collecting pre-1865 books, the like of which would have once graced the shelves of the Reverend Gaskell. Always keen to be of service the Chapel promptly filled Rev Anne's car with the relevant volumes and she was able to drive away happily replete, if a little down on her axles.

God bless, *Vince*

New Chairman's Letter

I would like to begin by thanking Vince for his words of encouragement as I start my new role as Chairman of the Congregation of Rivington Chapel. I will endeavour to carry out the responsibilities entrusted to me at the AGM to the best of my ability. Many thanks also to Vince for coping with both roles since his appointment as Lay Person in Charge in 2013.

Next, news of some events coming up in May. On Sunday 1 May, the Chapel will be open for visitors for a couple of hours before the service. As in previous years, we would like to open early on most Sundays over the summer when there is a service. If you would like to help out with this, please add your name to the rota on the notice-

board.

Our annual Congregational meal will be at the Yew Tree Inn, Heath Charnock, and will follow the Anniversary Service on Sunday 15 May. If you would like to go, please sign the sheet on the Chapel notice board, or contact Vince McCully on 01257 483733.

The Annual Rivington Spring Festival is taking place a few weeks later than usual this year. This is because Rivington Parish Church is celebrating a special anniversary in 2016 and the Festival has been planned to coincide with the visit of the Bishop of Durham to the Church.

Our Chapel will be open on Saturday 21 May between 11:00 am and 4:00 pm to welcome visitors. If you have any items of produce such as preserves or cakes, or any craft items that can be put on sale, please contact one of the Committee members.

Our current visitors' book is almost full. The first people to sign it were attending the Anniversary Sermons Service in 1994, so it has lasted 22 years. Paul and Diane Fairclough have very generously offered to donate a replacement, which we hope will be in place in plenty of time for this year's Anniversary.

With my flower rota organiser's hat on, I am pleased to report that two of the vacancies mentioned in the last newsletter have now been filled, so that just leaves the 3rd Sunday in January. If you would like to provide the flowers for that service, please let me know. If you are unable to attend the service when it is your turn, please let me know so that I can arrange for flowers to be put in Chapel on your behalf.

Alison Whitaker
Chairman

From the Committee

Notes from the AGM

Since the last AGM, the Committee had been looking at the Rivington Chapel Constitution which was drawn up in 2002. Three matters had been identified which needed to be considered at this year's meeting.

1. It was agreed that the words 'Lay Person in Charge' should be inserted following references to 'The Minister/Lay Leader'. This is to reflect the change in the title of the role that Vince carries out, as the term 'Lay Leader' now refers to a more formal role than it did in 2002.
2. The constitution requires that an up-to-date list of members is maintained. The committee has drawn up a draft list of members according to the criteria in the constitution, which will be checked in due course.
3. As the role of the Lay Person in Charge is that of an honorary, non-voting member of the Congregation, it was necessary to elect a new Chairman.

Election of Officers

Alison Whitaker was elected as the new Chairman of the Congregation and Frank Ascroft will continue as the Treasurer. No one has come forward willing to take on the role of Secretary since Joan Thursby retired last year. However, Dennis Crompton has volunteered to act as Minutes Secretary at Committee Meetings and the AGM. As he already receives a good deal of correspondence in his role as Lay Person in Charge, Vince McCully will act as the main contact for the Chapel. Other duties of the Secretary will be carried out by members of the Committee as and when necessary.

Details of the duties of the Secretary are included below, as the Committee would still be happy to hear from anyone who would like to take on the role.

Duties of Chapel Secretary

1. Print and distribute the agenda for Congregational Committee meetings and Congregational AGM.
2. Take the minutes at Congregational Committee meetings and the Congregational AGM.
3. Type up and circulate the minutes before next meeting.
4. Send and receive correspondence.
5. Act as primary contact for Rivington Pilgrimage.
6. Act as primary contact for MDA (Manchester District Association) and GA (General Assembly)
7. Keep the Chapel Notice Board up to date.

Facebook

Chris Martin had offered to start a Facebook page on behalf of the Chapel. The meeting decided to take him up on his kind offer, and the page is currently under construction. It is hoped that being on Facebook will raise the Chapel's on-line profile, particularly with the younger generation, and that this will lead to an increase in bookings for wedding and naming ceremonies.

Rivington Unitarian Chapel

Triennial Pilgrimage

Saturday 24 September 2016

Lancashire Lunch at Rivington Church Hall

Horrobin Lane, Rivington, Lancashire, BL6 7SE

Guest Speaker: Dot Hewerdine

President of the General Assembly

Please bring banners to display in the Hall

Service in Rivington Chapel

Conducted by: Rev Bob Janis-Dillon

Minister at Warrington, Bryn and Chester Chapels

Times

12:30pm Meet at Hall

1:00pm Lunch

3:15pm Service

Tickets for Lunch

(booking essential)

£12.50 Adult

£8.00 Child

Booking for Rivington Pilgrimage 2016

If you would like to book tickets for the Pilgrimage, please send a cheque made payable to **Rivington Chapel** to:

Alison Whitaker, 14 Church Street, Westhoughton, Bolton, BL5 3RS

Please indicate the number of adult and/or child tickets that you require, and any dietary requirements.

We would be grateful if you would include a stamped addressed envelope.

The closing date for bookings is **Friday 2 September 2016**. Tickets will be sent out during the week beginning 12 September.

2016 Calendar

Sun 15 May	Anniversary Service and Chapel Meal
Sat 21 May	Open Day in support of Rivington Spring Festival
Sun 5 June	Strawberry Tea
Sun 11 Sept	Late Summer Fair/Heritage Open Day
Sat 24 Sept	Rivington Pilgrimage
Sun 16 Oct	Harvest Festival
Sun 18 Dec	Christmas Carol Service

Trustees Matters

May I take this opportunity as the newly elected chairman of the Trustees to thank Peter Bearon for his considerable efforts during his chairmanship over many years, which combined with the duties of being Honorary Secretary, has demonstrated an enormous commitment to the wellbeing of the Chapel and its estate. Peter continues his secretarial role for which the Trustees are very grateful.

My background in higher education at the University of Bolton for over 40 years has enabled me in roles of Head of Department and Dean of Faculty to chair meetings, hopefully in a democratic and proactive fashion.

While during my university years I became interested in medieval church architecture which is so sadly lacking in the industrial North of England. However, Rivington Chapel, with a history stemming from 1703 is unique in its architecture, appears to have been little affected by the influence of the Victorian and Non-conformist architectures of the late 19th and early 20th centuries typically prevalent across the North West region. I feel privileged, therefore, to be able to chair the Trustees of this unique building.

I also feel that as in the title of Hardy's novel "The Return of the Native", joining the Unitarian congregation at Rivington a few years ago was indeed a "return" since my mother, when she lived in Silverwell Street as a little girl, attended the Bank Street Unitarian Chapel.

While the Chapel is unique with a fabric having survived over 300 years, it is evident that my role is not to help "preserve it in aspic", but to work with the Trustees and the Congregational Committee to ensure that it is a living entity. Simply put, the more that the Chapel is used, the more income it generates and the ease of ensuring its

longevity is increased. More importantly, the more comfortable is the congregation, during Winter services especially, the more vibrant it will become. Peter, in the previous Newsletter (Feb-April 2016), commented on the need to improve congregational comfort and with this in mind, the Trustees have identified this as a priority with the replacement of the old storage heaters and introduction of local heating within the pews seen as being now essential. In parallel, we are seeking professional advice from a conservation architect with regard to the whole structure of the building. The outcome will be a five year plan in which are identified, prioritised issues regarding the maintenance of the fabrics including advice on types of heating that may be compatible for use within this Class II* building.

Richard Horrocks
Chairman, Rivington Chapel Trustees

Gardening Parties

The Trustees are hoping to finish various jobs in the Garden of Remembrance and Chapel grounds before Spring really starts to show.

A gardening party on Saturday 2 April has made a start on these jobs, despite the bad weather. Apparently the rain was filling up the holes as fast as they were being dug!

There will be another session on Saturday 7 May from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Please come a long to lend a hand if you are able. Strong footwear or wellies and gloves are recommended, together with some basic tools.

Standing Orders and Gift Aid Donations

Some years ago, members and friends of Rivington Chapel were invited to make regular donations through Standing Order to support the work of the Chapel. We are very grateful to all who have made or still make such contributions. However, there may be some Chapel members and friends, particularly those who have joined us more recently, who are not aware that they can support the chapel in this way.

The 'simple beauty' of the Chapel building and its surroundings makes it a lovely setting for weddings and other ceremonies. However, earnings from Rites of Passage bookings are subject to fluctuation from year to year, and cannot be relied on to cover all the cost of utility bills and expenses such as fees for visiting ministers.

Being able to depend on a regular source of income is important for keeping the finances stable and ensuring that the Chapel remains open for visitors and for worship. Another advantage is that the regular donations are eligible for Gift Aid if you are a UK taxpayer. This enables the Chapel to claim an extra 25p for every £1 donated.

If you would like to set up a Standing Order to make regular payments to the Chapel, please contact me. My contact details are on the back of this newsletter.

Frank Ascroft, Treasurer

A thought from the comedian George Burns:

'The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending; and to have the two as close together as possible.'

Some thoughts from John Ruskin

I desire to leave this one great fact clearly stated.

There is no wealth but life.

Life including all its powers of love, of joy, and of admiration. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings; that man is richest who, having perfected the functions of his own life to the utmost, has also the widest helpful influence, both personal, and by means of his possessions, over the lives of others.

From 'Unto This Last' 1860

Morning breaks as I write, along those Coniston Fells, and the level mists, motionless, and grey beneath the rose of moorlands, veil the woods, and the sleeping village, and the long lawns of the lakeshore.

Oh, that someone had but told me, in my youth, when all my heart seemed to be set on these colours and clouds, that appear for a little while and then vanish away, how little my love of them would serve me, when the silence of lawn and wood in the dews of morning should be completed; and all my thoughts should be of those whom, by neither, I was to meet more.

From 'Notes by Mr Ruskin on his drawings by J. M. W. Turner' 1878

Let every dawn of morning be to you as the beginning of life, and every setting sun be to you as its close:- then let every one of these short lives leave it sure record of some kindly thing done for others - some goodly strength or knowledge gained for yourselves.

From 'Lectures on Art' 1870

Newsletter howlers

(Let's hope nothing similar gets through our rigorous proof-reading process!)

The Rev. Merriwether spoke briefly, much to the delight of the audience.

If you would like to make a donation, fill out a form, and drip in the collection basket.

A worm welcome to all who have come today.

The concert held in the church hall was a great success. Special thanks are due to the minister's daughter, who laboured the whole evening at the piano, which as usual fell upon her.

Potluck supper: prayer and medication to follow.

Booklets and Postcards

On sale in the Chapel and the Village Tearooms are two booklets produced by Michael Hough, 'Rivington Chapel Memorial Inscriptions' and 'Rivington Chapel Trustees Minutes, August 1859 to March 1955'. Also available is a pack of postcards featuring old photographs of the Chapel.

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

These are also available directly from Michael (plus the cost of postage and packing). Please contact him on 0113 267 7298.

Coffee4Craig

We continue to support Coffee4Craig, a not-for-profit organisation which supports and works with homeless people in Manchester and South Wales.

Some of you may have seen one of the street kitchens in Manchester featured recently in an article on homelessness on BBC News. More information about their work can be found on their website, www.coffee4craig.co.uk.

Coffee4Craig have limited storage space at their new headquarters, so cannot take larger items. However, they suggested that I approach another hostel and so I took the duvets that had been donated to Help the Homeless in Chorley who will be able use them.

Alison

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 May	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
15 May	Anniversary Sermons Graham Pilborough - Padiham Chapel
5 June	Chrissie Wilkie - Dean Row Chapel
19 June	Rev Nicky Jenkins - Chorlton Chapel
3 July	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
17 July	No Service - Iron Man event Chapel open for visitors
7 August	Rev Frank Williams - Horwich/Rivington

Flower Donors

1 May	Jaqueline Dagnall
15 May	Mary Horrocks
5 June	Judith Crompton
19 June	Jo Clark
3 July	Frank Ascroft
17 July	Joan Thursby
7 August	Olive Fisher

Other Dates and Ceremonies

Sun 15 May Time tbc	Annual Chapel Meal Yew Tree Inn, Heath Charnock
Sat 21 May 11 am - 4 pm	Open Day in support of Rivington Spring Festival
Sun 5 June After Service	Strawberry Tea
Sun 19 Jun 12:30 pm	Naming Ceremony of J.J Tommy Tomlinson, son of Jessica Fairclough and John Tomlinson Conducted by Vince McCully

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

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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,

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