

Rivington Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel



Founded 1662

Built 1703

"Here let no man a stranger be"



July to September 2011

www.unitarian.org.uk/mda/rivington

Chairman's Letter

Here is your newsletter as edited and arranged by Alison Whitaker. Thanks for taking on this job Alison - I'm sure you will be very successful.

This edition has sad news to report, as we say goodbye to a long time stalwart of the Chapel. I speak of Gwen Mutlow. Gwen died on 12 May aged 94 years. Her funeral service, sympathetically conducted by Rev Desmond Porter was held in Chapel on Friday 20 May. It was well attended by family and friends. Martin Brownlow paid tribute to Gwen during the service and his words are reproduced, in part, in this newsletter.

On a lighter note, our Anniversary Service was also splendidly taken by Rev Desmond Porter. This was a jovial occasion, as was the meal at The Cherry Tree restaurant afterwards. It was lovely to see so many of us having such a convivial gathering.

Our Open Day on 14 May in conjunction with Rivington Village Spring Festival gave us a steady stream of visitors which was encouraging given the awful weather that prevailed on that day. We are hoping for much better weather, however, when it is our Strawberry Tea on 17 July. Please come along to support and enjoy this joyful Summer event.

Your support is much needed for our Late Summer Fayre on Saturday 10 September. This is also linked to another event, namely Heritage Open Days. Your support is essential. The Heritage Open Days organisation is publicising all venues extensively, so we could do with tombola prizes, home produce, crafts and bric-a-brac etc. If you are making jams and such over the summer please make a little extra for our stalls.

Isobel's charity hitchhike, in aid of Education in Sub-Saharan Africa, raised £520.04. Isobel sends her thanks to her friends at Chapel who were so generous and encouraging.

Wishing you all an idyllic summer in which to recharge your batteries and hopefully enjoy some great trips. I now hand you over to the capable hands of Alison.

Vince

The Rivington Chapel Registers

As I am sure most of you will know, in 1988, Joan Holding and Colin D Rogers did some sterling work in producing a small booklet entitled 'The Nonconformist Chapel in Rivington, Lancashire, and its Early Registers'. The booklet gives a brief outline to the history of the chapel and its notable features. There is a description of the registers up to 1837 followed by a full transcription and indexes of personal and place names. Civil registration of births, marriages and deaths only commenced in 1837, so for anyone looking into their family history, registers such as these are essential to enable their ancestry before this date to be researched.

The cost of the printing of the booklets was borne by the chapel trustees. When the supply of booklets eventually ran out, it was decided that we should have a reprint. However, technology had moved on, and it was thought that we could now produce a better quality version. A reprint would also give the chance for some errors in the original booklet to be corrected. The intention was for the reprint to be ready for the tercentenary of the chapel.

The design of the new booklet was undertaken by Linda Green, and Joan updated the text where necessary. Everything was going

smoothly until the gremlins struck. With further changes in technology, the computer file the work had been saved in could not be opened. So, no further work took place for a few years. Luckily, Linda eventually managed to open the file, and work resumed. As the pagination had changed it was necessary to recompile the indexes. This turned out to be a mammoth task the size of which those of us who had never been involved in such a venture had not appreciated. First of all Joan and her friend Marjory checked the references, then Alison and I did some further proofreading. This has all taken a lot of time, but we now have a completed electronic version of the reprint. We have decided that, as next year will be the 350th anniversary of the ejection of Samuel Newton from Rivington Parish Church, this reprint should be produced to celebrate the event which eventually led to the building of our wonderful chapel in 1703.

At the next trustees meeting in the autumn, we will be deciding how many copies to have printed. However, technology has moved on again, and we wish to make the registers as accessible as possible. So, in addition to the printed copies, we will shortly be making the document available on the web. We have discussed whether we should ask people to pay for downloading an electronic copy, but have decided instead for it to be available free of charge but to ask for donations. Chris Haighton has set up a MyDonate web page. This will enable anyone who downloads a copy of the registers to make a donation to the chapel. It will also enable anyone who just wishes to make a donation to do so.

At the time of writing, the various links from the chapel web page hosted by the General Assembly (<http://www.unitarian.org.uk/mda/rivington>) are not set up, and the MyDonate page still needs to be

made more attractive. This should all be resolved in the near future. In the meantime, if anyone would like an electronic copy of the registers in pdf format, they can email me on:

registers@oneaccord.eu.

Anyone wishing to make a donation can go direct to the MyDonate page at: <https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/rivingtonchapel>

Chris is also in the process of arranging for the chapel trustees to be eligible for Gift Aid, which means that we will receive an additional 25p for every pound donated.

Peter Bearon - Chairman, Rivington Chapel Trustees

Gwendolyn Mutlow 1916 - 2011

It is with sadness that I write to inform the members of Rivington Chapel of the death of Gwen Mutlow on 12 May 2011 at the age of 94. Gwen's family connections with the Chapel go back to the time of her great-grandfather Richard Bond. He left Purl Brook Farm on Brownlow Road, Horwich and took the farm at Rivington called Moor Edge. Here, he and his wife lived for several years before moving to 4 Mill Hill Cottages where Richard died in 1902 aged 80. Gwen's grandparents left Purl Brook Farm in 1890, when Gwen's mother, Annie Elizabeth Southworth, was two weeks old, to take over School Brow Farm, Rivington.

When, in 1900, W. H. Lever bought the estate from Mr Crompton, he and Mr and Mrs Bond were old friends. The friendship dated back to the 1870s, when Mrs Bond had a small grocer's shop at what is now 12 Brownlow Road. In his early days, when working for his father's business in Bolton, Lever would call there for their weekly order.

In 1904, the Southworth family was given notice to leave School Brow, it being in the way of the creation of Lever Park. Mr James Southworth sadly died that year, aged only 37, following an accident at the Anglezarke quarries.

Mrs Southworth and her family moved to Sweetloves, a farm built in 1714 by Edmund Sweetlove just behind Rivington Hall. Nearby stood Moor Edge Farm and Lower House Farm and it was to the latter that the family moved after a few years at Sweetloves.

Towards the end of the first decade of the 20th century the family moved to Bolton Road in Adlington. Gwen's mother met her future husband, James Hull, just before World War I, and they were married in 1914 at the Victoria Wesleyan Chapel in Horwich. Their first home was in Melbourne Grove where Gwen was born in 1916. In the early 1920s, the family moved to 5 Evans Street.

Gwen was educated at Horwich Parish School and at Commercial College, where she won the gold medal. In 1934 she took a job at the Horwich Loco Works, where she worked until her retirement in 1971.

Gwen married John Mutlow in 1981, and they had 20 very happy years together before John died in 2001.

I owe Gwen and her mother a debt of gratitude for all the many happy hours of reminiscences of Rivington from the 1890s onwards and for all the help and encouragement in the study of Rivington, its history and its people.

Happy memories.

Martin Brownlow

News from One Accord

One Accord's new CD has finally been released - in fact Judith was our first customer. The CD is called "Broadcast it o'er the Land", which is a line from the words we have put to the tune "Glasgow". The tune was given to us by our organist Roy Shepherd. Full details are on our website: www.oneaccord.eu

We've decided to mark the occasion with a party evening of music and song. This will be held at Rivington Club on Friday 15 July from 7:30 pm to 11 pm. Please come along to help us celebrate by singing, playing or just being there.

If you would like to come to the party, please let us know on (01942) 816569 or by emailing peter@oneaccord.eu

Snippets from the Past

An extract (edited) from the **Bolton Weekly Journal**, Saturday 8 January 1881:

Induction Service at Rivington

On Wednesday afternoon, an interesting service took place in Rivington Chapel, the occasion being the public induction of the Rev S Thompson to the pastorate.

The Rev W. Gaskell delivered the "charge" to the new Minister. He urged Mr Thompson to "promote spiritual life, remembering that he who would move others must first be moved himself. Whilst working to gather a faithful band around him Mr Thompson would bear in mind that he had no sacerdotal profession or priestly authority. The bond between him and the congregation would have to be one of love, and to secure that he would have to be ready to sympathise with people in their joys and their griefs, to lighten the burden of the

weary and heavy laden, to cheer the desponding, to console the mourner and pour the light of another world on the bereavements of this.”

The Rev S Thompson, in reply, said it was with feelings of great responsibility he had listened to the charge. He thought the work would be congenial, or he would not have entered into it, nor should he have entered into it if he had not been convinced of the truths of Unitarian Christianity.

A congregational soiree was held in the schoolroom in the evening, presided over by Mr J.W. Crompton of Rivington.

A note from the editor

As this is the first newsletter since I took over as editor, I would like to give readers the opportunity to make suggestions about what they would like to see in future editions. Certain features, such as the Chairman's Letter, Diary Dates and Contact Details, will need to remain. We can also continue with items reflecting the lighter side of life, such as Winstanley's Wisdom.

A few possibilities I've thought of:

- contributions from members of the congregation on the theme of "what Unitarianism means to me", or "why I come to Rivington Chapel"
- details of events at other chapels/Great Hucklow
- information from MDA/Essex House

If this is the sort of thing you would like to see in the newsletter, or if you have any other suggestions, please let me know.

I would be grateful if anyone whose contact details are included in this issue would let me know if any updates are needed.

Dates for your Diary

Sunday Services at 2:15 PM

3 July	Vince Mc Cully - Rivington Chapel
17 July	Gordon and Veronica Walker - Bank Street Chapel
7 August	Jennifer Whitelaw - Chow Bent Chapel
21 August	Larry Bode - Dean Row Chapel
4 September	Vince Mc Cully - Rivington Chapel
18 September	Gordon and Veronica Walker - Bank Street Chapel
2 October	Rev Desmond Porter - Walmsley Chapel

Flower Donors

3 July	Frank Ascroft
17 July	Linda Hadfield
7 August	Olive Fisher
21 August	Miss E Curwen
4 September	Joan Thursby
18 September	Elsie Kent (Tea Room)
2 October	Vince and Isobel Mc Cully

Other Dates and Ceremonies

Fri 1 July 1:00 pm	Wedding - Catherine O'Donnell and Andrzej Baranek conducted by Joan Holding
Fri 8 July 2:00 pm	Wedding - Janice Emmett and Paul Coulson conducted by Joan Holding
Sun 17 July	Strawberry Tea - a Summer Celebration
Sun 24 July 3:30 pm	Wedding - Jacqueline Barlow and Malcolm Wigman conducted by Joan Holding

Sat 30 July Naming Ceremony - Sadie, daughter of Paul and Kelly
2:00 pm Davies
 conducted by Joan Holding

Fri 5 August Wedding - Jennifer Roberts and Christopher Keenan
12:30 pm conducted by Rev J and Rev D Roberts

Sat 10 September Wedding - Vanisa Mistry and Johnathan Newman
10:00 am conducted by Vince Mc Cully

Sat 10 September Late Summer Fayre and Heritage Open Day
1:00 to 4:00 pm

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

Joan Thursby tel: (01204) 520264

Copy date for next issue: 1 September 2011

send to: Alison Whitaker, 14 Church Street, Westhoughton, Bolton,
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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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