

# Rivington Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel



Founded 1662

Built 1703

*"Here let no man a stranger be"*



November 2012 - January 2013

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

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

## Chairman's Letter

As you will be able to see in the newsletter and at the back in "Dates for your Diary", there is lots going on in the life of our Chapel. I say "our Chapel" because, being a community, it belongs to all of us.

Sadly, our community has lost two beloved members with the deaths of Joan Holding on 19th June 2012 and Judith Oldham on 5th August 2012. Anybody with the slightest knowledge of Rivington Chapel will have had the privilege of knowing Joan. At every turn, whether in committee or at open days, at Chapel services or just by phone, I find a void, a missing "lynch-pin", I can't be the only one to miss Joan so much. God bless you Joan. Our most heartfelt sympathies go out to Joan's family and friends.

Judith Oldham's passing is no less keenly felt; she had been attending our services for a couple of years now and was always a welcome and enthusiastic member of the congregation. God bless you, Judith. Our most heartfelt sympathies go out to her dear husband Christopher, her family and her friends.

We have had much sadness over the Summer and yet Chapel life goes on. The Strawberry Tea on 15th July was wonderful.

Many thanks to Roy Shepherd for this. Roy has asked that we have it earlier next year, to ensure we continue to get the pick of the crop.

Then there was the service, conducted by Rev Stephen Lingwood, on 19th August, to celebrate Judith and Dennis Crompton's 50th Wedding Anniversary; a wonderful, happy family time for them, and for us. And just to top it all, the committee, ignoring pleas for "no presents please" presented them with two matching Golden Willows (in pots, of course).

On Saturday 8th September we had our "Late Summer Fayre" cum

Heritage Open Day which was just fantastic. Everyone was there, it was really great to have so much fun together; we also raised the terrific sum of £353.55. So a big "Well Done" to everybody who helped in any way at all.

Other matters to report: discussions about repairing the Chapel approach road continue and everyone agrees it needs to be seen to, sooner rather than later; plans to cut down and root out the rhododendrons in the church yard which are obscuring and damaging grave stones and can be vectors of "oak sudden death disease".

At 7.30pm on Thursday 13th December One Accord are very kindly putting on a concert in Chapel. The tickets are very reasonably priced at £5 with most of the proceeds to Chapel and the Trustees. There will also be mulled cider (or wine) and mince pies. Please do your best to support this event, I bet it will be worth it.

With that I will sign off; if I've forgotten anybody or anything I apologise in advance.

God Bless *Vince*

### **Golden Wedding**

Dennis and Judith thank those attending the service to celebrate our Golden Wedding for making it such a happy occasion. Also, over the week-end, a sum over £500 was raised for the Bolton Hospice .

## **A Note from the Editor**

A reminder that the newsletters are now available to download from the new website [www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk](http://www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk). In the last edition, I mentioned that it is also possible for you to receive your copy by e-mail. So far, I have had only one response. If we are going to make a significant reduction to printing and postage costs, a lot more people will need to take advantage of this option. If you are happy to have an e-mail version rather than a paper copy, please contact me on [newsletter@rivingtonchapel.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@rivingtonchapel.org.uk).

Please also use this e-mail address to send me your contributions for the newsletter.

**Alison**

## **Trustees Matters**

The trustees held a meeting on Wednesday 26 September.

Unfortunately we have lost two trustees since the last meeting in March; Joan Holding who died in June and Geoffrey Head who finds it difficult to get to meetings now he no longer has a driving licence. On a much pleasanter note we welcomed Linda Hadfield on to the trust, and since the meeting Paul Fairclough has also agreed to join. It is good to have some new blood, and we look forward to their contributions in the future

Vince has already mentioned in his letter the discussions regarding the access road and the rhododendron bushes. The other main points covered were about what we should do once the niches in the Garden of Remembrance are full and the need for updating the trust constitution to better reflect the use of the chapel in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Peter Bearon, Chairman & Secretary**

## Joan Holding      December 1925 - June 2012

If you wanted to know about your ancestors (but not too much), the history of the Garden of Rest and the names of the herbs in that garden; if you were interested in the habits of red setters and the secret thoughts of donkeys; if you needed to know the best route to some obscure village in the Midlands, or the best cargo boat to take to Norway; if you merely wanted to know a good restaurant on the A6, or you simply needed a good laugh with other members of the congregation, then the person you spoke to was Joan.

Joan was born in 1925 in Stretford, the same year as Baird's first TV transmitter and the very same year as the first of the Chalet School Stories for Girls which she adored reading. At the High School, she excelled especially in Geography, which accounts for her love and knowledge of travel. She was evacuated to Macclesfield shortly before the Luftwaffe thoughtlessly destroyed her family home, including the beloved Steinway piano. After living in Cheadle, she taught at the Bolton Thomasson School for the Deaf.

It was following the death of her parents that she bought, in Blackrod, Lime Kiln Cottage which many of us remember as a kind of "Jane Austen" dwelling. Indeed, when persistent double glazing salesmen phoned, she dealt with them by putting on a haughty voice, *"You do know, don't you, that this is a listed building"*.

But of course she had much to do with a real listed building: Rivington Chapel. In the minds of the congregation she will always be identified with its history and its fabric. By the door to the lower vestry hangs the list of ministers which she paid for from the proceeds of the first edition of the Registers booklet she compiled with Colin Rogers. If you ring the bell, your hand will be on the sally

she obtained; and in the bookcase you may see copies of 'Rivington Recipes' which she helped to compile. Though never claiming to be the Delia of the kitchen, she had stern views about the make-up of the authentic Olde English Trifle and about an obscure dish called 'Lancashire foots' (you must never, never call them 'feet', and of course, we didn't). In the display desk you would find newsletters containing her well-researched and often humorous articles. In the centre of the building stands the rail where she sometimes presided over rites of passage, and with a motherly chuckle married couples and named babies. At one end stands the organ which she played somewhat reluctantly, but correctly, whenever there was a crisis. Whilst still active, she was one of the Rivington Ramblers and she later instigated that most hazardous of outings, the annual sailing on the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. But then she was no stranger to danger as she had for many years been chairman of our committee. Her generosity and other contributions to the chapel have become almost legendary.

Music and history were her great loves. She went on tour to Germany with the Unitarian Choir. At Christmas, we listened to her beloved team of hand-bell ringers, once in great bewilderment when she started them off with the music upside down. Her love of history showed in the many talks she gave, for example, on "The Poor Law" and "The Postal Service" (which could be quite challenging to the audience when invited to attempt to blow that antique post-horn of hers).

Joan was not over-fond of alcohol but you may have heard about her strange encounter with a bottle of Sanatogen. This had been left over after an Autumn Fair and its contents shared amongst the helpers.

Having been assured that it had medicinal properties she joined in, only to feel, as she put it, a little "*disorientated*". This unusual state she put down to only having had to eat what she called a "teasted toe-cake." As a result there is now a small group of the congregation that is now and forever incapable of ordering a toasted tea-cake without asking for a "teasted toe-cake" and so risking being asked to leave by wary and suspicious café owners.

I am sure many people will have special stories about Joan, funny or serious. It is hard to say farewell to such a loveable and talented person, but as long as this chapel lasts so will the memory of Joan Holding: kind and extraordinary - and extraordinarily kind.

**An edited version of the tribute given by Dennis Crompton at Joan's  
funeral**

Joan's funeral was held on 5<sup>th</sup> July. Her ashes were scattered with a short service conducted by Judith on Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> October. This issue's cover photograph was taken in the physic garden. (Ed.)

**Snippets from the past**

Extract from the **Manchester Guardian**, 28 June 1907

The North-East Lancashire Automobile Club will hold an open Hill-climbing competition for petrol touring cars on July 19 on Rivington Pike. The course is a length of 1 km on Roynton Road, Rivington. For more than two thirds of the length the gradients are more than one in 10.1 or one in 9.9. The last 27 yards are the steepest - one in 9.8. A silver cup will be presented by the President of the Club (Mr William Birtwistle) for the car showing the best results under the Royal Automobile Club's system of handicapping for hill climbs.

## **Rivington Chapel Web Sites**

Links have now been set up between the two web sites, [www.ukunitarians.org.uk/rivington](http://www.ukunitarians.org.uk/rivington) and [www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk](http://www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk), so that it is easy to navigate between them.

I would like to remind you that the new web site comes with the facility of unlimited email addresses, so if anyone from the chapel would like a [yourname@rivingtonchapel.org.uk](mailto:yourname@rivingtonchapel.org.uk) email address please let me know and I will set one up.

As I mentioned in the last issue, it is easy to set up further web pages within the trustees' site, so if the chapel committee, or anyone else would like me to expand the content, let me know. Any suggestions on how the site can be improved will also be welcomed.

**Peter Bearon**

[trustsec@rivingtonchapel.org.uk](mailto:trustsec@rivingtonchapel.org.uk)

## **On a lighter note**

How many Unitarians does it take to change a light bulb?

This statement was issued: We choose not to make a statement either for or against the need for a light bulb. However, if in your own journey you have found that light bulbs work for you, that is fine. You are invited to write a poem or compose a modern dance about your light bulb for the next Sunday service, in which we will explore a number of light bulb traditions, including incandescent, fluorescent, three-way, long-life and tinted, all of which are equally valid paths to luminescence.





# **Rivington Unitarian Chapel**

present a **Christmas Concert**

featuring songs, tunes and stories from living tradition  
with popular local quartet



# **One Accord**

on **Thursday 13 December**

Doors open **7.00 pm** to start at **7.30 pm**

**Admission: £5** (includes seasonal refreshments)

Contact: Joan on 01204 520264 or  
Frank on 01257 483635 for tickets

**[www.oneaccord.eu](http://www.oneaccord.eu)**

## Dates for your Diary

### Sunday Services at 2:15 PM

4 November	Vince Mc Cully - Rivington Chapel
18 November	Veronica and Gordon Walker - Bank Street Chapel
2 December	Rev Nicky Jenkins - Chorlton Chapel
16 December	Carol Service - Rivington Chapel Congregation
6 January	Vince Mc Cully - Rivington Chapel
20 January	Geoff Newey - Rivington Chapel
3 February	Rev Bob Pounder - Oldham Chapel

### Flower Donors

4 November	Roy Shepherd
18 November	John Patefield
2 December	Carol Worsley
16 December	Christmas decorations
6 January	Elsie Kent
20 January	Lynne Haighton
3 February	Alison Whitaker and Peter Bearon

### Other Dates and Ceremonies

Sat 27 October 1:30 pm	Wedding - Janine Bates and Dominic Draper (conducted by Vince McCully)
Sat 3 November 12:00 pm	Naming Ceremony - Iona Jane, daughter of Laura and Christoph Barnes (conducted by Vince McCully)

Sun 4 November Congregational Committee Meeting

After service

Thu 13 December One Accord Christmas Concert (see advert)

7:30 pm

Sun 16 December Carol Service (with complimentary tea and mince pies)

2:15 pm

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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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email: [newsletter@rivingtonchapel.org.uk](mailto: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***

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