

# Rivington Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel



Founded 1662

Built 1703

*"Here let no man a stranger be"*



Aug - Oct 2019

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

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

Facebook: Rivington Unitarian Chapel

## **Lay Person in Charge's Letter**

During the course of writing letters for this newsletter I often write about our highs and lows. In this one, the highs seem higher and the lows lower.

We have very recently seen the passing of two close friends of our Chapel, Gordon Walker and Michael Williamson.

Gordon was 85 years old when he died, having fought cancer for the last 14 of them. Along with his wife Veronica, Gordon had conducted many services in Chapel for us as a visiting preacher. Often called the 'Dynamic Duo', their services were both thought provoking and 'good for one's spirit'. You will be sorely missed, Gordon, not just by your friends here at Rivington Chapel but by many other chapels in the Northwest, especially Bank Street where you tirelessly performed many important duties.

Michael was just 55 years old when he passed recently . Along with his wife Debs, he had become a valued member of our congregation after they were married in our Chapel on 16 August 2017. Theirs was a profound love that was plain to all who met them. We were sad to see them leave us as they set off for a life anew in Portugal last year. Debs is heartbroken, but fortunately both myself and other members of our congregation have been able to keep in touch with her via Messenger and Facebook. The distance is a barrier to the physical help we can give Debs, but we hope that our love and concern, our thoughts and our prayers can give her at least a little comfort in this her saddest of times.

On a brighter note, Paul, Diane, Marge and myself replanted our Physic Garden in April . Of course it rained but it was a great job well done, due in no small part to Paul and Diane's initial ground work and

kind donations which helped us to get it underway.

Speaking of kind donations, I can't find enough words of gratitude to speak of the kindness shown to Chapel at the Rivington Spring Festival. Stall holders were at liberty to make donations to any charity of their choice. Some of the donations we were given were £90 from Tony and Lisa, £70 from Steve and Caroline, £20 from June at Primrose Crafts and £85 from the BBQ run by councillors Trevor and Rob; this was part of £170 they raised and shared between us and Rivington Parish Church.

Giving a more rounded dimension to the occasion, on the morning of the Festival, our organist Hannah Carolan and her gang from the New Rosemere Singers played and sang to a rapt audience and had great fun. While in the afternoon, The Bennet Ladies Choir, a community choir, also sang in Chapel and were a huge hit to an appreciative public.

All in all the Rivington Spring Festival was a huge community success with over £1200.00 being raised for charities and good causes. We had new faces such as Chorley Sheds and old favourites like Chorley Lions. Let us all hope it continues to grow in size and scope and yet still remain as friendly and as welcoming as it is now. Very, very well done to all who were able to take part and support it in any way.

It is encouraging when a small chapel like ours is able to be involved in a meaningful way with the wider community and again this was reflected in our hosting a service as part of the Walt Whitman Bicentenary Celebration at the beginning of June.

Of course our local community was invited as we enjoyed a musical night with 'One Accord' on Friday 5 July and celebrated with them their achievements over the last two decades plus. It was a special

night and Linda, Alison, Peter and John were simply superb. Yes, it was a special night, though bitter-sweet knowing that this was one of the last few concerts they will perform as a group. The atmosphere was amazing; a superb and characterful setting with a perfect match of music. The home-made cakes and 'Summer Cup' went down well and went a long way to create the homeliness that is this Chapel. A good time was most assuredly had by all.

What next?

On Sunday 4 August we will be holding a service conducted by the Congregation. This is something we have not done before and it gives folk a chance to hold the reins for a change and explore the act of conveying their approach to spirituality and way of worship to a wider, no doubt, appreciative audience. I am really looking forward to it and offer whatever help and resources that it is in my power to provide.

Our Late Summer Fair and Heritage Open Day is on Saturday 14 September where we will open our doors to all, showing off our history and our much-loved Chapel. We get a chance to treat people to delicious home-made produce, crafts and traditional tombola, bric-a-brac and book stalls. All support, of any kind, is most gratefully received.

Then there's our Triennial Pilgrimage on Saturday 28 September, again a hugely influential affair but this time within our own Unitarian world. With Rev Danny Crosby conducting the service and Rev Celia Cartwright proposing the toast to Civil and Religious Liberties, it looks all set to be a day to remember. If you haven't been before, do join us, you won't be disappointed.

It's time to sign off now, so until I write again please keep well and God bless.

*Vince*

Lay Person In Charge

### **Chairman's Letter**

We are still looking to appoint a new representative to attend Manchester District Association meetings on the Chapel's behalf. If there is any member of the Congregation who would be willing to be our MDA representative, please speak to Vince to find out more about what it would entail.

In the last newsletter I wrote about the need for an additional authorised person for weddings. I am pleased to report that Chris Martin has expressed an interest and has been liaising with Frank about what the role involves.

Vince has already mentioned the concert on 5 July featuring One Accord. A total of £486 was raised, which will be shared by the Chapel, the Trustees and Chorley Lions. Thanks again to those who helped on the night and provided the interval refreshments (home-made cakes and Vince's summer cup) and raffle prizes.

Vince also mentioned the service on Sunday 4 August which will be taken by members of the Congregation. The theme will be 'A Sunny Summer's Day'. If you would like to take part, or have any suggestions for readings, hymns or music, please let either me or Vince know.

At the end of June, I was contacted via the UkUnitarians message

service by an American chap in search of information about an ancestor who was buried in the churchyard in 1824. His name is Jefferson Bilsborrow, and he had found the reference to the burial of his four-times great grandfather Richard Bilsborrow in the PDF version of the Registers booklet which is available online. After consulting the graveyard plan and the Memorial Inscriptions booklet produced by Michael Hough, Peter and I were able to locate the relevant gravestone and take photographs which we have sent to Jefferson. He has ordered a copy of the Memorial Inscriptions booklet and has offered to make a donation to Chapel.

### **General Assembly Annual Meetings 2019**

The meetings returned to the Birmingham Hilton Metropole after a year away. This was the first time that the meetings took place over three days rather than four, following the resolution passed in 2017 to allow the timetable to undergo modifications. The most notable changes were that the opening ceremony was a much shorter affair, the John Relly Beard Lecture and the Keynote lecture were combined, and meetings and presentations were all given a one-hour slot rather than ninety minutes.

As well as all the routine official business, delegates were asked to consider a motion from the Foy Society. When this group was founded in 1924, FOY stood for 'Fellowship of Youth'. Now its members are of all ages, and are engaged in seeking to understand the nature of a range of present day issues and problems. The motion was on the subject of knife crime, the main point being to ask our political leaders to investigate ways to reduce the ready availability of the kind of sharp pointed knives which are most often used by those carrying out knife crime. After some debate, the motion was largely carried. Those

who spoke against were concerned that it did not address the underlying causes of the issue, but several people thought that it would be a useful first step. If anyone would like to see the full motion and the background paper, please let me know.

A significant event was the official launch of Unitarian College. At this and other presentations during the meetings members of staff including Director Helen Mason and Ministry Tutor Rev Ant Howe outlined the structure of the new college and how it will provide training for ministry students, lay leaders and worship leaders.

The Inquirer magazine held a reception to present its revamped format which features changes to the layout and the font. Comments were invited, and the most significant feedback was that some of the text was difficult to read as it was too small and too pale. As a result, changes have been made and in subsequent editions the font is both larger and darker.

Some of the meetings I attended addressed some very serious issues. Catherine Lennox spoke at the Unitarian Women's Group session about the effects on many girls' lives of Period Poverty. We see publicity for charities such as ActionAid which runs projects overseas, but it was a shock to discover the extent to which girls in the UK miss PE lessons or take time off school because of the expense of menstrual products. Fortunately, there are now some campaigns and initiatives being developed to improve the situation.

Rev Mária Pap's talk to the International Association for Religious Freedom was entitled "Perspectives on religious freedom in Eastern Europe". Mária trained as a Minister in the Hungarian Unitarian Church (formerly the Unitarian Church of Transylvania) but is now living in the UK and is Minister at the Old Meeting House in Mans-

field. She spoke about the pressures on religious freedom being experienced in Romania from the Romanian Orthodox Church and in Hungary from the state.

The Plenary sessions on the final morning are traditionally the time when the new President takes over, and Rev Celia Cartwright duly took over from Joan Cook, with Anne Mills from Bury Chapel being appointed as Vice President. Another significant change was the appointment of Liz Slade as the new Chief Officer of the Unitarian Movement. This follows the retirement of Derek McAuley who had served as Chief Officer since 2009. Along with other faith leaders he was instrumental in bringing about the changes to the Law on Equal Marriage. At the end of his farewell speech, there was a very moving moment when he invited his husband to join him on stage.

If anyone would like to know more details about the proceedings, please ask either me or Vince, who was there on behalf of the Manchester District Association (MDA). Having now attended the GA Meetings twice, I am happy to recommend the experience and would encourage other members of our congregation to consider going in the future, either as our official delegate or in a personal capacity.

**Alison Whitaker**  
**Chairman, Congregational Committee**

### **Trust Matters**

The last few months have been relatively quiet with regard to the Chapel and its estate. Of major interest at the present time is the renewal of the Tea Room lease from September 2019. The current tenants are interested in a 10 year lease and the Trustees have had a special meeting to prepare the terms under which such a lease will



be offered.

With regard to making the Tea Room/former Sunday School building's longer term maintenance more affordable (both to the Trustees and tenant), we are holding discussions with Historic England as to how it may be delisted while falling within the curtilage of the Class II\* listed Chapel. If the building is able to be delisted, it would, of course, be still subject to the Conservation Area requirements currently existing in Rivington village.

**Richard Horrocks**  
**Chairman, Rivington Chapel Trustees**

### **Trustees – Treasurer Still Required**

As mentioned in the last newsletter, Michael Hough, the current treasurer to the trustees, is thinking about stepping down from the role. Michael has been the treasurer since March 2014. In addition to looking after the finances, he has done sterling work on the conservation of the fabric of the Chapel, arranging for a quinquennial review and then taking a lead in liaising with our conservation architect.

None of the current Trustees who has the time feels qualified to take on the role and so we are asking if anyone would like to join the Trustees and become the treasurer. As Michael will not be stepping down immediately, any prospective new treasurer will be able to work alongside him before taking on the role. Chris Houghton, a previous treasurer, is still a trustee and could advise if necessary.

If anyone is interested in taking on the role of treasurer, please contact me on 01204 493757 or talk to me at a service.

**Richard Horrocks**  
**Chairman to the Trustees**

# **Rivington Unitarian Chapel**

## **Triennial Pilgrimage**

**Saturday 28 September 2019**

### **Lancashire Lunch at Rivington Church Hall**

Horrobin Lane, Rivington, Lancashire, BL6 7SE

### **Guest Speaker: Rev Celia Cartwright**

President of the General Assembly

**Please bring banners to display in the Hall**

### **Service in Rivington Chapel**

### **Conducted by: Rev Danny Crosby**

Minister at Altrincham and Urmston Chapels

#### **Times**

12:30pm Meet at Hall

1:00pm Lunch

3:15pm Service

#### **Tickets for Lunch**

**(booking essential)**

£14.50          Adult

£8.00          Child

## **Booking for Rivington Pilgrimage 2019**

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 8 September 2019**. Tickets will be sent out during the week beginning 16 September.

## **Christmas Cards & Calendar 2020**

Following the successful display of potential front cover photographs in the Chapel as part of the Rivington Spring Festival activities, the winner of the visitors' poll was Chris Martin. Local amateur photographers have also contributed enough winter scenes to enable the calendar and a series of Christmas cards to be produced.

It is planned to sell these cards in 2 packs of 6 cards each, in both A5 and A6 sizes with envelopes, and for the 2020 Calendar and cards to be available at the Late Summer Fair in September.

**M Hough**

## **2019 Calendar**

Sat 14 Sept	Late Summer Fair/Heritage Open Day
Sat 28 Sept	Rivington Triennial Pilgrimage
Sun 20 Oct	Harvest Festival
Sun 15 Dec	Christmas Carol Service

### **Rivington Chapel Publications**

The latest addition to the series of reprints of 'Rivington and District' booklets by David Owen is 'A History of Rivington Church'.

This booklet, together with all the publications in the collection, are on sale in the Chapel and The Village Tea Room. They are also available directly from Michael Hough (plus the cost of postage and packing). Please contact him on 0113 267 7298.

Full details of all our publications are also on the website:

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

### **A Note from the Editor**

If you need to inform us of any change in your details, or if you no longer wish to receive our newsletter, please ring Mary Horrocks on 01204 493757. You can also notify us by emailing [newsletter@rivingtonchapel.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@rivingtonchapel.org.uk).

Also, please email if you would like to help us reduce the cost of printing and posting the newsletter by opting 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).

## **Coffee4Craig**

We continue to support Coffee4Craig, a charity which supports and works with homeless people in Manchester and South Wales. More information about their work can be found on their website, [www.coffee4craig.co.uk](http://www.coffee4craig.co.uk).

Coffee4Craig have limited storage space at their new headquarters, so cannot take larger items. However, donations of tinned/storable foods, toiletries and some household goods can also be taken to Help the Homeless in Chorley. They are based at 45 Clifford Street, which is not far from Flat Iron car park.

## **Global Chalice Lighting**

Awaking every morning  
See what you can achieve!  
Your life again is dawning.  
Just trust in your belief!

Your dream can be your vision.  
You hold it in your hands.  
Start living your decision,  
reach out and take the chance!

Arise as mists are fading!  
Doors are open wide.  
Your happiness is waiting,  
so step into the light!

**Words offered in honour of the second gathering of  
European Unitarians Together**

## Dates for your Diary

### Sunday Services at 2:15 PM

4 August	The Congregation
18 August	Laura Dobson - Chorlton Chapel
1 September	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
15 September	Rev Lynne Readett - Chow Bent Chapel
6 October	Jean Clements - Denton Chapel
20 October	Harvest Festival Chrissie Wilkie - Dene Row Chapel
3 November	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel

### Flower Donors

4 August	Elsie Kent
18 August	Mary Hough
1 September	Jacque and Tim Kershaw
15 September	Elsie Kent
6 October	Vince and Isobel McCully
20 October	Mary Horrocks
3 November	Jacque Kershaw

## Other Dates and Ceremonies

Sun 25 Aug	Naming Ceremony - Georgia Lynne and Erin Kelly, children of Kelly and Paul Davies Conducted by Vince McCully
Sat 14 Sept	Heritage Open Days Late Summer Fair
Sat 21 Sept	West Gallery Singing Day
Sat 28 Sept	Rivington Triennial Pilgrimage

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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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**Issue date: 20 Oct 2019**

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telephone: 01942 816569

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.

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