

Rivington Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel



Founded 1662

Built 1703

"Here let no man a stranger be"



Feb - Apr 2019

www.ukunitarians.org.uk/rivington

www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk

www.facebook.com/Rivington-Unitarian-Chapel-1724516264491069

Lay Person in Charge's Letter

Since our last newsletter things have been a little calmer around Rivington, thank goodness. 2018 was pretty unforgettable, wasn't it.

Our Harvest Festival service was conducted by Laura Dobson from Chorlton Chapel and was very well attended. Such was the generosity of everyone that my car was groaning under the weight of all the produce that Laura and I took down to 'Centre Point' on Oldham Street in Manchester. Our friends Risha and Hendrix of Coffee4Craig fame and the staff there were "totally made-up" with what we gave them.

The Christmas Craft fair at the Bay Horse, Heath Charnock, also benefitted from your kind donations and purchases. We also sold some publications for the Trustees and raised £34 for them along with £151 for Chapel funds.

A resident of Rivington asked me to pass on a donation of £150 along with a used Hi-Fi and flat screen TV to Coffee4Craig. (They also help to house the homeless.) This person wishes to remain anonymous. It is gestures such as these are so vital and it is humbling for us to be asked to be a part of it.

Our Carol Service was also very well attended and once more Santa Claus (Dean Taylor) was a knock-out with all the children, young and old. Often described as a carol fest, this year did not disappoint and a good time was had by all. We had just enough mince pies - I think there were 5 left over! Also we had augmented our hymn book stock by a further 40 in the weeks before Christmas, timely indeed.

We mentioned briefly at the service that if anyone would like to sponsor a hymnal they could do so. It will cost £10 and you can have an acknowledgement or dedication put on the title page. Some forms

are available in Chapel or from Frank Ascroft, our illustrious treasurer.

So, 2019 is a Pilgrimage year and moves are afoot to make it as good as ever. Rev Celia Cartwright (GA President) will be proposing the toast to Civil and Religious Liberties at lunch on the day. The celebrant for the service which follows will be Rev Danny Crosby.

Rivington Spring Festival is coming up on the 11th May and we have already arranged a musical element in Chapel which Hannah Carolan, one of our organists, has agreed to do with her musical friends. Stalls which have a charity element are welcome and hopefully the weather will allow us to use the green. If not, we have the Church Hall booked for that afternoon.

Some further news, our friend Laura Dobson has applied for Ministry Training, to begin in 2019. We wish her every success in her endeavours.

I close wishing that 2019 brings to everyone their heart's desire.

God Bless,

Vince

Lay Person In Charge

A thought

When one door of happiness closes, another opens, but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one that has been opened for us

Helen Keller

2019 Calendar

Sun 17 Mar	Congregational AGM
Sat 11 May	Rivington Village Festival
Sun 19 May	Anniversary Sermons
Sun 2 Jun	Strawberry Tea and Walt Whitman bicentenary celebration
Sat 14 Sept (tbc)	Late Summer Fair/Heritage Open Day
Sat 28 Sept	Rivington Triennial Pilgrimage
Sun 20 Oct	Harvest Festival
Sun 15 Dec	Christmas Carol Service

Notice of AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Congregation of Rivington Chapel
will be held after the service on

Sunday 17 March 2019

A Nomination Form for the posts of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer
and Committee members will be displayed on the notice board in
Chapel.

The closing date for nominations will be Sunday 3 March 2019

Chairman's Letter

As you will see from the notice which precedes this letter, the Congregational AGM is coming up, and the Nomination Form for the various Committee posts will shortly be displayed on the notice board. As the post has been vacant for some time, it would be good to appoint a Secretary for the coming year, and a couple more Committee members. So, I'd like to appeal to all members of the Chapel to give some serious consideration to the idea of taking on the role of Secretary or becoming a member of the Committee. If you would like to find out more about what is involved before making a commitment, please ask me or one of the other Committee members.

During the Autumn it was agreed that the Congregation would take over responsibility for the care of the Physic Garden. The Committee decided that it would be a good idea to start by organising some working parties during the spring to complete the work begun last year of clearing the garden ready for replanting. Dates for these will be arranged in due course.

Richard Horrocks has written previously about the need to replace two of the benches in the Garden of Remembrance. The dedicatory plaques were removed for safe keeping before the old benches were disposed of, but we still need to identify the people named on one of the plaques: **Walter Simpson, Esther Simpson, John Gregson, Harriet Gregson**. If anyone can shed any light on who these people were, we would be very grateful. The other bench was dedicated to Andrews and Teresa Crompton, and we are very grateful to Roger Crompton, their grandson, for his generous donation to cover the cost of one of the new benches.

We were very sad to hear of the death in November of Elsie Curwen,

a long standing member of the Chapel. Although her visits to Chapel had become less frequent in recent years, she maintained her connection by providing flowers, supporting our spring and autumn fairs and through regular donations. Her funeral on Friday 30 November was conducted by Judith Crompton.

Alison Whitaker
Chairman, Congregational Committee

Trust Matters

Since the last Newsletter and the announcement that the Chapel would be launching a 2019 calendar, we can report that this was a great success with sales attracting almost £600, a considerably greater sum than the cost of production. We shall be repeating this initiative next year with interesting photographs of the Chapel and surroundings welcome.

The progress with the purchase and installation of CCTV has been slower than expected partly because of the difficulty in deciding which system to choose and also awaiting the outcome of a bid to the Gregson/Hibbert Trust. This unfortunately fell outside the remit of the charity and so could not be supported. However, we have selected a system which we plan to have installed during the early New Year.

The gales in November caused damage to the Tea Room in that the large gable end window was blown in. This caused considerable inconvenience to our tenant for a time until the area could be covered, sealed and rendered weather tight. While we expect that we can claim for this in whole or in part on the insurance policy, we have had to contract our architect to design a replacement which, having

been done, has been sent out to a number of companies for tender. We are still awaiting replies. While the architect was on the premises, a separate design for a potential replacement of the side windows was made. It is anticipated in the future that we shall submit a proposal to an appropriate funding body to replace all the side windows in the Tea Room and so having a design already available will assist this process.

Finally, the “MyDonate” page on the website attracted a generous donation from Mr Eddie Tapp, who was born in Major Bottoms. He spent his boyhood in the area until leaving after graduating from Liverpool University to pursue a medical career and retiring from Preston Hospital in 1999. While he and his parents were associated with Rivington Parish Church, a recent visit found the Chapel open and so he could visit it for the first time. Some of his reminiscences of Rivington are presented elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Richard Horrocks
Chairman, Rivington Chapel Trustees

Elsie Curwen 1930 - 2018

Elsie was one of the four children of Thomas and Jane Curwen, who were married at Rivington Chapel. After a period of moving around the North-West in search of work, the family settled in the Adlington area in 1947. She had lived for many years at Major Bottoms, in a house which had belonged to her grandparents and has been in the family for over a hundred years.

After a seven-year apprenticeship to become a seamstress, she spent most of her working life at Chorley Hospital where she was employed to make alterations and repairs to staff clothing, curtains and bedding.

Outside work, much of Elsie's life was spent helping and caring for others. She valued the independence that driving gave her, and was able to continue driving until the age of 88.

At the funeral, Judith spoke of her memories of "... this quiet but determined and unfailingly dignified lady... immaculately dressed and never without a beautiful hat" who "always sat in what had been the family pew and continued to pay her pew rent. No longer known as pew rent, she paid what she regarded as her 'dues' until the end of her life and always donated generously to any special service or fund-raising event." Judith always had to make sure that she kept back a couple of jars of her home-made lemon curd for Elsie at Chapel fairs, and would take some when visiting her at Major Bottoms.

During these visits, Elsie would tell... "stories of the Chapel, The Village and so many real characters by which they were peopled. Elsie knew everything about their lives and relationships and the knowledge she so generously shared with me were of inestimable help during my lay ministry of this place."

Elsie was baptised at Rivington Chapel and it was always her wish that this would be her final resting place.

[Thanks to Elsie's nephew Duncan and Judith Crompton for these words about Elsie – Ed.]

A Thought (quoted by Judith at Elsie Curwen's funeral)

No person can fully sum up the life of another. Life is too precious to be passed over with mere words. Rather it must remain as it is remembered by those who loved and watched and shared.

Charles Gains

Remembrance Day Displays

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of WWI the Chapel was open over the weekends of 10-11 and 17-18 November for visitors to view the results of research into local events and residents. Whilst the devastation caused by the conflict in 1914-18 can be seen as from a different era, it should not be forgotten that in the Chapel burial ground are to be found three family memorials to casualties of this war; Cpl E W Peirce, Gnr H Whalley and Pte G Pilkington.

A Book of Honour has been compiled for the district (Anderton, Belmont, Heath Charnock and Rivington) using public memorials, church plaques, rolls of honour, Commonwealth War Graves Commission and other sources. It is now available in the Chapel.

Details of WWI servicemen were presented by way of a photograph and short summary of personal background and military service. It is hoped that a permanent record can be produced and published in the near future to add to the range of publications on sale.

Photographs, letters, service records, medals, marriage certificates, national archives were used to illustrate the contribution and sacrifice of men in both world wars: the crew of the Wellington bomber which crashed on Anglezarke Moor in November 1943; C T and N Hough of Ward's Cottage; Sgt W G Ratcliffe of The Green, Rivington.

Amongst the many visitors over both weekends we were pleased to meet the niece and nephew (from Adelaide, South Australia) of Flt Sgt Joe Timperon, the Australian pilot of the crashed aircraft and David Ratcliffe and his wife (from Halifax, W Yorkshire), the nephew of Gordon Ratcliffe who was also killed on a training flight in 1945.

Thanks are due to Janette and Blythe Cordwell, Kathleen at the Great

Barn Visitor Centre and the Rivington Bowling Club for their contributions and loan of material.

M & S Hough

Memories of Rivington: Eddie Tapp

I was born in Major Bottoms in 1934 and attended the Elementary School in Rivington and the Rivington and Blackrod Grammar School, before going to Liverpool University. After getting married in 1959, I lived in Bolton until I retired in 1999 and moved to Worcestershire.

My time at the grammar school and university did not leave me much time for Rivington but when we lived in Bolton we had some contact with the Church and my daughter was married there. However when I visited Rivington the Chapel was always closed. Consequently I was very pleased when my son brought me north for a few days and on 10 November I found it open. It was very good to see the inside of a building that I had not been in for over 75 years. I found it much better maintained than I had expected and I was happy to chat to Michael Hough and his brother who were being very helpful to visitors.

Whilst living in Worcester, the only occasions that I have been to Rivington have been to attend funerals, not an uncommon thing when you get into your 80s, my father, mother, sister and many more relatives being buried in the Anglican churchyard.

When I came on 10 November Rivington didn't appear to have changed significantly. However I noticed that the stocks were on the Village Green rather than in the Vicarage grounds. The Post Office had gone; I remember in the 1930s it being run by Mrs Berry who had sons Freddy and Harold who attended the Elementary School with me. I recognised School House where in my day Mr Whitehead lived,

and the house further along from there where the Heatons lived. Mrs Heaton played the piano, and her elder son the drums, at social functions both in the Chapel schoolroom and the Village Hall. He also took the Bible Class in the Village Hall on Sunday afternoons.

Also recognisable is Fisher House, home of the Hesketh family from 1931. Phoebe of course wrote the book "Rivington, The Story of a Village" in which locals believed that many of them were depicted under pseudonyms.

As a child in Major Bottoms, although we were members of the Anglican church, I had contact with the Misses Brindles, Florence Woosey (known as Poppy) and Miss Kershaw who were neighbours and members of the Chapel. Poppy did not have children and used to look after my sister and me. One day when we were out walking, a violent thunderstorm came on with loud thunder and heavy rain. I remember Poppy looking up at the sky and saying, "Send it down, Daniel". At the time, being only about 6 years old, I was not sure to what she was referring, but I hadn't heard it in Sunday School so I thought it must be 'Chapel'.

As a nine or ten year old I remember going to Christmas parties in both the Chapel school room and the Church hall with much the same people at both.

When I was a pupil at the village school Mr Whitehead was headmaster. The school was very small, there being no more than twenty pupils. The local authorities made several attempts to close it but fortunately it survived to become the thriving school that it is today. Attendances at the School, Church and no doubt the Chapel were affected by the fact that few people had cars, and those who had were affected by petrol rationing.

Booklets and Postcards

A selection of local history books has just been added to the collection of publications on sale in the Chapel and The Village Tea Room. These are reprints of three booklets about the Rivington area written by David Owen; 'Boundaries and Watercourses', 'Wartime Memories' and 'The Village School'. David, who died a few years ago aged 83, was one of the children of Rev George Owen, who was vicar of Rivington Church in the 1940s and 50s. He attended Rivington and Blackrod Grammar School and worked as a mining engineer. He was very interested in local history and wrote about many diverse topics. Michael Hough has been granted permission by Mrs Owen, David's widow, to reproduce the booklets to raise funds for the Chapel. The full list of publications is now:

Rivington Chapel Memorial Inscriptions	£2.50
Rivington Chapel Trustees Minutes	£3.00
Postcards (set of 8)	£1.50
Rivington Recipes	£4.00
Rivington Chapel Bi-Centenary	£4.00
Boundaries & Watercourses (D. Owen)	£3.00
Wartime Memories (D. Owen)	£3.00
The Village School (D. Owen)	£2.50

These are also available directly from Michael (plus the cost of postage and packing). Please contact him on 0113 267 7298. Details are also on the website: www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk/publications

On a lighter note

I know my humour is outrageous when it makes the Unitarians so mad that they burn a question mark on my front lawn.

Lenny Bruce

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.

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.

Alison

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.

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.

Dates for your Diary

Sunday Services at 2:15 PM

3 February	Dr Irvine Delamore - Rivington Church
17 February	Rev Frank Williams - Rivington Chapel
3 March	Chrissie Wilkie - Dean Row Chapel
17 March	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
7 April	Jean Clements - Denton Chapel
21 April	Graeme Pilbrough - Padiham Chapel
5 May	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel

Flower Donors

3 February	Alison Whitaker and Peter Bearon
17 February	Iris Wharton
3 March	Diane Fairclough
17 March	Michael and Teresa Hough
7 April	Olive Mayor
21 April	Olive Fisher
5 May	Mary Horrocks

Other Dates and Ceremonies

Sun 17 February After Service	Congregational Committee Meeting
Sun 17 March After Service	Congregational AGM
Wed 20 March 6:30 pm	Chapel Trustees AGM
Sat 13 April	Wedding of Janine Rawlinson and Andrew Firth 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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send to: Alison Whitaker, 14 Church Street, Westhoughton, Bolton,
BL5 3RS

telephone: 01942 816569

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.

Lay Person in Charge & Pulpit Supply	Vince McCully 20 Thirlmere Close, Anderton, Lancashire, PR6 9QD 01257 483733 email: vinmcul@hotmail.co.uk
Your Committee	
Chairman Newsletter Editor & Flower Rota	Alison Whitaker 14 Church Street, Westhoughton, Bolton, BL5 3RS 01942 816569 email: newsletter@rivingtonchapel.org.uk
Secretary	Position vacant
Treasurer & Chapel Keeper	Frank Ascroft 13a Highfield Road North, Adlington, Lancashire, PR6 9RN 01257 483635 email: ascroftf@pobroadband.co.uk
Publicity Officer	Dennis Crompton 21 Woodfall, Astley Village, Chorley, PR7 1XD 01257 671869 email: crompton.df@uwclub.net
Rites of Passage and Newsletter Distribution	Mary Horrocks 01204 493757
Other Committee Members	Jacqueline Dagnall 01204 691833 Paul & Diane Fairclough 01257 474761