

# Rivington Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel



Founded 1662

Built 1703

*"Here let no man a stranger be"*



Feb - Apr 2020

[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**

Once more we divest ourselves of Christmas's gay apparel and we are launched into not only a new year but a new decade. We will be facing new challenges, tasks and hurdles which we must surmount if we are to be here for the next decade.

I am confident that we are more than equal to these tasks, not because of wishful thinking, but because we are relevant in today's society. We provide meaningful services and support to our immediate and wider communities, we are inclusive in our worship and spiritual approach and with regard to important issues of the day.

So, what are we going to do or omit to do?

Do we open our doors for weekly social gatherings?

Do we continue to act as the hub for 'Rivington Spring Festival'?

Do we open our doors for the performing of same-sex marriages, as other Unitarian Chapels and Churches have done?

Do we build more niches and thereby remain relevant to the needs of future Unitarians?

Will we take up our full representation on the MDA (Manchester District Association) Council; we are allowed two such representatives, plus minister.

Do we continue with the three-yearly Pilgrimage to celebrate 'Civil and Religious Liberties'?

Some of these questions have pretty obvious answers you might think, others less so. What they all have in common is that they all depend on the energy, efforts and enthusiasm of our own dedicated Chapel members. Without you, we are as of nothing.

Questions, questions, but they all need your consideration. Other news is that our carol service was a huge success with just over a hundred attenders including ten children.

We lost a one-time very active member of our congregation with the passing of Sylvia Worthington who died just before Christmas aged 98 years.

I conducted her funeral here in Chapel and later at Overdale Crematorium on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and Judith Crompton who, of all of us, knew Sylvia best, will be writing a tribute to Sylvia. (*This will appear in the next newsletter* – Ed.)

I wish you all a happy, prosperous and fulfilling year and decade to come.

*Vince*

Lay Person In Charge

### **2020 Calendar**

#### **2020**

Sun 15 Mar	Congregational AGM
Sat 9 May	Rivington Village Festival
Sun 17 May	Anniversary Sermons
Sun 7 June	Strawberry Tea
Sat 12 Sept (tbc)	Heritage Open Day and Late Summer Fair
Sun 18 Oct	Harvest Festival
Sun 20 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 15 March 2020

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 1 March 2020

### **Chairman's Letter**

It will soon be time for the Congregational AGM, so please look out for the nomination form for the various committee posts. In addition to the officers, we can have up to seven other members. If anyone is interested in finding out more about what is involved, particularly for the role of Secretary, please ask me or any of the current committee members.

Towards the end of 2018, we bought some additional copies of the hymn book, and people were asked if they would like to sponsor a book and have an acknowledgement or dedication put on the title page. At the time a few people did make a donation, but recently we realised that nothing more had been done to acknowledge the contributions. Vince has now produced some bookplates, so we can proceed with putting them into the hymnbooks. If there is anyone else who would like to sponsor a book, the cost is £10, and forms for recording your dedication are available in Chapel or from Frank Ascroft.

One of the things discussed at the last Committee meeting was how we might make the Chapel more environmentally friendly. As a first

step we now have three bins in the kitchen so that we can sort some of our waste on the premises. One bin is for paper and card, one for recyclable plastic, glass and metal, and one for general waste. All the rubbish will still have to be taken away and disposed of in the appropriate domestic waste collection, but it is an improvement on just putting everything into one bin. We also intend to try and make sure that we avoid the use of disposable, single-use items when reusable ones are available.

The 2020 General Assembly Meetings will be from Tuesday 7 to Thursday 9 April at the Birmingham Hilton Metropole Hotel which is close to the NEC. As I will be unable to go this year due to being on holiday that week, it's a good opportunity for another member of the Congregation to attend as the Chapel's delegate and find out more about the part we play in the wider Unitarian movement. The cost of attending (£272, which covers the conference fee, accommodation and meals), will be borne by the Chapel. Applications for registration need to be made by 18 February (although it is possible to book up to 10 March, but there is a £50 late booking fee). If you would like to know more, please contact me (details on back page) or have a look at the website <https://unitarianmeetings2020.com>, though please note that some information has still to be updated.

We were sad to hear of the death shortly before Christmas of Sylvia Worthington. Although it is some years since she was able to come to Rivington, many will remember her sitting in the pew with Jimmy and Alice Winstanley, and her portrayal of Lady Willoughby when the Chapel was visited by school groups.

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

## **Trust Matters**

There is nothing really new to report since the Autumn Newsletter. We are still renegotiating the Tea Room lease on a 10-year basis with our current tenants and once agreed, it will be signed retrospectively to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019. With regard to its listed status, because it falls within the curtilage of the Class II\* listed chapel, we are still awaiting the outcome of our application to Historic England for the Tearoom to be “delisted” based on the main criterion that it ceased to have any link with the Chapel’s religious activities following closure of the Sunday School in the 1950/60 period.

Michael Hough is stepping down from his current position as Honorary Treasurer, which he has held for the last five years and during which he has guided the Trustees through the 2016 Quinquennial Review and subsequent work undertaken on the various refurbishment projects that have occurred since then. His services have been invaluable and will be sorely missed following the next AGM in March 2020. May I take this opportunity to thank him for all his work and hope that he will be available to give advice when required. During his phasing out period, his duties are being shared with Chris Houghton and David Worsley. We have placed an advert in the Newsletter and on the Chapel website inviting candidates who may wish to be considered for the post from March to apply directly to me. Marge Bradshaw has also circulated the details to appropriate contacts in her wide social media network.

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

## **Rivington Chapel Trustees - Honorary Treasurer Required**

Rivington Chapel lies in the centre of the small village of Rivington in Lancashire. Rivington is about 3 miles southwest of Chorley and lies at the foot of the West Pennine Moors, a site of special scientific interest. The chapel itself was built in 1703 and is a grade II\* listed building. It is one of the few chapels still in regular use that have retained the original box pews.

The day to day affairs of the Chapel are run by a congregational committee, but the building itself is the responsibility of the Rivington Chapel Trust\*. The trust is responsible for:

- Maintenance of the chapel buildings
- Maintenance of the chapel grounds
- Supporting the continuation of dissenting worship in the chapel

Although the chapel was originally built for a Presbyterian congregation, at some point it became Unitarian and has remained so ever since. The original 1704 deed only stipulated that the members of the congregation should be dissenting protestants. Further information about the chapel can be found at:

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

The current treasurer has officially retired from the role but is continuing to assist the trustees until the next AGM in March 2020 or until a replacement is found.

Every year a report is produced by the trustees, including a financial report. The reports for 2017 and 2018 can be found at: <http://www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk/trusteesreports.html>



The treasurer's role is unpaid, although reasonable expenses can be reclaimed. Full trustees' meetings are usually held twice a year, with additional ones if required. Most day to day business is undertaken via email and phone calls.

Applicants need not be Unitarians but should have one or more of the following attributes:

1. A financial interest or background or previous experience as a treasurer in the voluntary sector.
2. Time to undertake the role.
3. An interest in volunteering generally.
4. An interest in historic buildings.

If you are interested in becoming our new treasurer, or wish to know more information, then please download our recruitment pack from [www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk/treasurerpack.pdf](http://www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk/treasurerpack.pdf) or contact the Honorary Chairman on [trustadvert@rivingtonchapel.org.uk](mailto:trustadvert@rivingtonchapel.org.uk) or 01204 493757

Richard Horrocks, Honorary Chairman  
Peter Bearon, Honorary Secretary

\* The title of the trust is registered with Charity Commissioners as Rivington Presbyterian Chapel (trust property held in connection with) but is known as Rivington Chapel Trust. We are in the process of trying to get the name formally changed.

### **A thought**

May we remember that in the lights that shine, the shadow becomes deeper and hides more easily those for whom the season is not bright but bleak; and where we can, bring at least the warmth of our presence.

**Rev Celia Cartwright, GA President, from her Christmas Message**

## **Scenic Rivington Calendar 2021**

Although we are only a short way into 2020, Chris Martin would like you to be thinking ahead to the 2021 edition. If you are out and about with your camera in the Rivington area in the coming months, and take any photographs that you think might be suitable for the calendar, please send them to Chris (email: [chris\\_and\\_june@hotmail.com](mailto:chris_and_june@hotmail.com)) by 1 August 2020. This will allow time to put the calendar together so that it can be on sale at the Late Summer Fair in September. Photographs should be high resolution (the more pixels the better) which means that pictures taken on mobile phones may not always be suitable.

Meanwhile, the last few 2020 calendars are on sale in the Tea Room at the reduced price of £4.00.

## **The Chapel Library**

Only a few volumes now remain of a large and once important social resource, originally housed in the former minister's accommodation (kitchen/vestry) prior to the building of the Sunday School.

Quotes from local history writers give some idea of its size and scope:

1904: Wm Fergusson Irvine, 'A short history of Rivington', page 109:

"there is also in connection with the Chapel a good library, containing hundreds of volumes, commenced about the year 1821, by the Rev James Taylor being the principal mover in the matter".

1969: J Rawlinson, 'About Rivington', page 50:

"A library was commenced at the Chapel by the Rev James Taylor in

1821, it was immediately popular and a large number of books were quickly obtained. There were no restrictions on membership. It was open to anyone whatever their creed or practices, and is now housed in the Schoolroom”.

1893: T Hampson, ‘History of Rivington’, page 170:

“The Library in connection with this Chapel was formerly a most noted one throughout the district, and any works of advanced thought, no matter to what particular theology or other school they might belong, were sure to find a resting place here; and youths in the surrounding district could command works from this well managed Library, which were denied them elsewhere”.

Over the years the condition of the books deteriorated and in 1985 the library was dispersed, although it would appear that Eddie Tapp (*see article in Newsletter May – Jul 2019 – Ed.*) may have had a hand in recycling some of them for the 1939 - 45 war effort! Of the remaining volumes, those appropriate to the period were donated in 2014 to Gaskell House in Manchester to restock its own library.

Approx 40 books, most still with the original reference label, have been cleaned and minor repairs carried out - all that remains of the Chapel Library.

**M Hough**

### **A thought**

Go confidently in the direction of your dreams! Live the life you’ve imagined.

**Henry David Thoreau, 19th Century American writer**

## **A Prayer**

Open our ears

To hear what is said to us

In the things that happen and by the people we meet.

Open our hands

To reach out to one another in friendship

And to help when help is needed.

Open our lips

To share our stories with one another

And to bring comfort, inspiration, joy and laughter to each other.

Open our minds

To discover new truth about ourselves, about each other and about the world.

Open our hearts

To welcome one another freely.

**Adapted from a prayer from Corrymeela, a peace and reconciliation organisation in Northern Ireland**

## **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 Chris Martin (plus the cost of postage and packing). Please contact him on 01257 483702.

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

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

## **Coffee4Craig**

We continue to support Coffee4Craig, a charity which supports and works with homeless people in Manchester and South Wales.

Coffee4Craig, in conjunction with Centre Point North, now operates a seven day a week drop-in centre on Oldham Street in the centre of Manchester. More information about the charity's work can be found on the website, [www.coffee4craig.co.uk](http://www.coffee4craig.co.uk).

Coffee4Craig takes donations of fresh produce as these can be used straight away to provide meals in the drop-in centre. Items such as toiletries and clothing are also welcome.

If you have any larger items, particularly household goods, they can, together with non-perishable foodstuff and toiletries, be taken to Help the Homeless in Chorley. They are based at 45 Clifford Street, which is not far from Flat Iron car park.

## **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).

**Alison**

## Dates for your Diary

### Sunday Services at 2:15 PM

2 February	Geoff Newey - Rivington Chapel
16 February	Graeme Pilbrough - Padiham Chapel
1 March	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
15 March	Chrissie Wilkie - Dean Row Chapel
5 April	Jean Clements - Denton Chapel
19 April	Hannah Stephenson - Southport Congregation
3 May	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel

### Flower Donors

2 February	Alison Whitaker and Peter Bearon
16 February	Iris Wharton
1 March	Diane Fairclough
15 March	Michael and Teresa Hough
5 April	Olive Mayor
19 April	Olive Fisher
3 May	Mary Horrocks

## Other Dates and Ceremonies

Sun 2 February After service	Congregational Committee Meeting
Sun 23 February 1:30 pm	Naming Ceremony - Rupert, son of Rachel and Joe Denver Conducted by Vince McCully
Sun 15 March After service	Congregational AGM
Sun 26 April 1:00 pm	Naming Ceremony - Nathaniel Sefton Jude, son of Leanne and Zac Hackett Conducted by Vince McCully

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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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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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