

# Rivington Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel



Founded 1662

Built 1703

*"Here let no one a stranger be"*



May - Jul 2025

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

Facebook: Rivington Unitarian Chapel

## **2025 Calendar**

Sat 10 May	Rivington Spring Festival
Sun 18 May	Anniversary Sermons
Sun 01 Jun	Strawberry Tea
Sat 13 Sep	Heritage Open Day
Sat 27 Sep	Rivington Triennial Pilgrimage
Sun 19 Oct	Harvest Festival
Sun 21 Dec	Christmas Carol Service

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

This has been a month of contrasts, a time of quiet and a time of intense activity and all with a background of radiant blue skies. I cannot remember an April like it; in fact, our Chapel Facebook page is festooned with blue sky pictures of Chapel from virtually every angle.

On 1 April, we held the funeral of Dr Frank Yates, a long-time trustee of the Chapel, who, sadly, has passed away aged 91. He and his wife Doris had moved to Scarborough to be near their daughter Ruth some years ago, but Frank's express wish was to have his funeral in Rivington and for his ashes to be kept in our columbarium. A man of many talents who looked after the health of many in Adlington, Rivington, Anderton and Heath Charnock, it is no wonder he was so well known and that his funeral was so very well attended. Dr Yates' popularity was due in no small part to his hands-on approach; he part-managed the building of Granville Street surgery and delivered

many of the babies in the village.

At a time when many of our Chapels and Churches, even in well populated areas, are struggling to maintain numbers, we seem to be holding up OK. Chris Martin and Geoff Newey's opening of Chapel for two hours at 1pm on each 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday afternoon is bringing a welcome footfall in Chapel. Our new columbarium extension is also bringing a renewed community focus for the Chapel, thanks in no small part to the ministrations of Debbie Atkins and Paul Fairclough.

How we connect with the community is all important to the longevity of our Chapel and our Unitarian ethos of inclusion. Being at the centre of our village Spring Festival on Saturday 10 May (11am-4pm) is another way of keeping us in focus and helps no-end in raising funds for local good causes and charities.

Our Congregational Chairman Alison Whitaker, Judith Crompton and myself all attended the GA Meetings, held this year in Birmingham, and we paraded our Chapel banner most proudly. As part of the proceedings I was accepted onto the General Assembly (GA) Lay Leaders Register, having successfully completed the 'Advanced Worship Leadership Course', which training is invaluable in supporting communities such as ours.

While at the GA Meetings you get to see our church in the wider world, the bigger picture, so to speak. One of the sessions I attended was the 'Facilitators Network' run by Jane Blackall and Lizzie Kingston-Harrison. In this it was explained to us that *'Nurturing small groups as spaces for connection, sharing, self-reflection and solidarity is an increasingly essential part of the work we do as a movement'*. Having joined this group I, or we, will be able to call upon the experience gained by others who have years of know-how in creating strong

'engagement groups'. I was thinking of perhaps starting an art group where participants could meet and mix with varying degrees of social contact, but it's early doors yet and much to learn first.

I wish everybody a happy Easter and joyously sunny summer season.

Stay safe and God bless

*Vince*

**Lay Person In Charge**

### **Chairman's Letter**

This year's Rivington Spring Festival will be on Saturday 10 May, when the Chapel will be open to visitors. Some stalls on the Village Green are also planned and if you could spare an hour or two to help with these, please let us know.

Our Anniversary Meal will be at 4:00 pm on Sunday 18 May at the Bay Horse in Heath Charnock. Roast meals will be available, or you will be able to choose from the main menu. Please sign the sheet on the notice board as soon as possible if you want to come, and indicate if you would like a roast meal. As last year, these will need to be ordered in advance; we will find out what the options are the week beforehand.

Rivington Parish Council has a new website <https://www.rivingtonparishcouncil.org.uk> which includes a log of problems in the area due to traffic. The council is asking for information on any problems encountered to be reported to [clerk@rivingtonparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@rivingtonparishcouncil.org.uk) with details of the incident including the date and the weather and a photo if possible.

The GA meetings last weekend were as usual informative, inspiring

and uplifting. A full report will appear in the next newsletter.

There have been some recent changes to the pulpit rota, which means that Sunday 15 June has become free. So, this will now be a service featuring contributions from the Congregation. If you have a suggestion for a theme, hymns, readings or music please let me know as soon as possible so that we can start to plan.

This issue's cover photo is courtesy of David Southern, a professional photographer who visited Rivington recently and has given permission for us to use some of the photographs he took, both inside the Chapel and aerial shots using a drone.

### **AGM Report**

The officers were re-elected unopposed: Chairman - Alison Whitaker, Treasurer - Frank Ascroft. Olive Fisher was officially elected to the Committee following her co-option during the year, and joins Diane Fairclough, Paul Fairclough and Geoff Newey.

Vince was re-elected as Lay Person in Charge.

It was decided to bring the AGM in 2026 forward to the first Sunday in March to avoid a clash with Mothering Sunday. It will be held on Sunday 1 March.

The draft minutes have been circulated by email and there is a copy on the notice board in Chapel together with the statement of accounts. They will also be available on the Chapel website ([www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk](http://www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk)).

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

## **Trustees Matters**

At the March AGM, the Annual Report for 2024 was presented to the meeting and accepted with the year showing a significant improvement of income over expenditure as well as an increase in the value of our investments. Both these figures were influenced by the gift of £30,000 earlier in the year from the Bank Street Chapel Trustees. This was in spite of incurring the cost of building the now completed columbarium extension for approximately £16,000. Already three niches have been sold under the new conditions of limited tenure (15 years) at £1500 per niche. There are projects in hand to improve the character of the Garden of Remembrance, including gentle cleaning of the original columbarium stonework, flagstone cleaning and the creation of a pathway around the new extension.

Before the AGM, our stalwart Trustee of many years, Olive Fisher, tendered her resignation, although as an active member of the Congregation she continues as valued member of the Congregational Committee. On behalf of the Trustees, I presented her with a gift at the Chapel service on Sunday 6 April as a token of their thanks for her contribution.

The Trustees, working through the Secretary and Natasha Stanley at the MDA, have commissioned a digital survey of the upper vestry and Chapel to assist with any future works. With regard to the vestry, the plausibility of replacing the staircase with one more easily accessible plus the building of an internal toilet is under investigation using the MDA architect. Once this is undertaken, then appropriate costings may be obtained. However, before any work may be carried out, a 'Heritage Statement' will have to be produced and this too is being pursued with the help of the MDA. Because of these plans, the

Trustees have been advised to restore the next Quinquennial Review back to 2026, with full costs being borne by the MDA and the Hibbert Trust.

Finally, in order to improve access for wheelchair users, the Trustees have agreed to purchase a portable ramp within the near future and definitely before a service that will be presented by two guest speakers, one of whom is a wheelchair user.

Richard Horrocks  
Chairman of the Trustees

# **Oak Apple Day**

## **Traditional Music Session**



**Thursday 29 May**

**1:00 - 4:00 pm**

**Rivington Unitarian Chapel**  
**Donations towards the upkeep of the**  
**Chapel**

## **New email addresses**

Some new email addresses have recently been set up that you can use for contacting the officers of the Chapel Trustees and for other specific reasons. These are:

[trustchair@rivingtonchapel.org.uk](mailto:trustchair@rivingtonchapel.org.uk) to contact the Chairman

[trustsec2@rivingtonchapel.org.uk](mailto:trustsec2@rivingtonchapel.org.uk) to contact the Secretary

[trusttreasurer@rivingtonchapel.org.uk](mailto:trusttreasurer@rivingtonchapel.org.uk) to contact the Treasurer

[remembrance@rivingtonchapel.org.uk](mailto:remembrance@rivingtonchapel.org.uk) for enquiries about the Garden of Remembrance

[estates@rivingtonchapel.org.uk](mailto:estates@rivingtonchapel.org.uk) for matters relating to the buildings and the grounds

There is also an address to contact Vince McCully, our Lay Person in Charge: [laycharge@rivingtonchapel.org.uk](mailto:laycharge@rivingtonchapel.org.uk)





The photograph on the previous page was taken in what is now the Tea Room, probably in about 1985. It's certainly changed a bit since then! I recognise the coat rack on the left which ended up in the Chapel kitchen for quite a while. Thanks to Chris Martin for passing this on.

*A poem suggested by Iris Wharton*

### **The Summer Day**

Who made the world  
Who made the swan, and the black bear?  
Who made the grasshopper?  
This grasshopper, I mean –  
the one who has flung herself out of the grass  
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,  
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down –  
who is gazing round with her enormous and complicated eyes.  
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.  
Now she snaps her wings open and floats away.  
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.  
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down  
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,  
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,  
which is what I've been doing all day.  
Tell me, what else should I have done?  
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?  
Tell me, what is it you plan to do  
with your one wild and precious life?

**Mary Oliver (winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry)**

# Rivington Unitarian Chapel

## Triennial Pilgrimage

**Saturday 27 September 2025**

### **Lunch at Rivington Village Green Tea Room**

Sheephouse Lane, Rivington, Lancashire, BL6 7SD

### **Guest Speaker: Prof Geoff Levermore**

President of the General Assembly

**Please bring banners to display in the Tea Room**

### **Service in Rivington Chapel**

### **Conducted by: Rev Cody Coyne**

Minister at Cross Street, Manchester and

President of the MDA

#### **Times**

12:30pm Meet at Hall

1:00pm Lunch

3:15pm Service

#### **Tickets for Lunch**

**(booking essential)**

£18.00 Adult

£9.00 Child

## Menu

Details of the menu are still being finalised and will be available shortly.

Dietary requirements will be catered for.

## Booking for Rivington Pilgrimage 2025

If you would like to book tickets for the Pilgrimage, you can:

- send a cheque made payable to **Rivington Chapel** to:

**Alison Whitaker, 14 Church Street, Westhoughton, Bolton, BL5 3RS**

- pay by Bank Transfer (please email: [contact@rivingtonchapel.org.uk](mailto:contact@rivingtonchapel.org.uk) with your requirements and for the bank details)

Please indicate the number of adult and/or child tickets that you require, your menu choices and any dietary requirements.

**We would be grateful if you would either include a stamped addressed envelope or an email address so that tickets can be sent electronically.**

The closing date for bookings is **Friday 12 September 2025**. Tickets will be sent out during the week beginning 15 September.

## Rivington Open Hour

Chris Martin hosts an open hour in the Chapel on the first Wednesday of each month between 2:00 and 3:00 pm, when he gives visitors a free guided tour of the Chapel and talks about its history. The Chapel will next be open on Wednesday 7 May.

### **Thoughts for summer**

Summer suns are glowing  
Over land and sea;  
Happy light is flowing  
Bountiful and free.  
Everything rejoices  
In the mellow rays;  
All earth's thousand voices  
Swell the song of praise.

From the hymn written in 1871 by  
**William Walsham How, 1823-97**

### **Virtual Tour**

If you are not able to visit the Chapel in person, you can look at the 3D virtual tour created by Daniel Stenson from ViewPro360 in conjunction with Chris.

The tour shows a 3D image of the interior of the Chapel, and by clicking on the buttons for the highlighted features you can find information about each one.



You can 'enter' the virtual tour either by following this link <https://rivingtonchapel.org.uk/virtual-tour-of-rivington-chapel/> or using this QR code if you have a reader on your phone or other device.

There are now some QR codes in the Chapel and also at various points in the grounds.

## **Publications**

Please contact Chris Martin (01257 483702, [email: chris\\_and\\_june@hotmail.com](mailto:chris_and_june@hotmail.com)) if you would like to buy any of the various Rivington Chapel publications, details of which can be found on the website: [www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk/publications](http://www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk/publications)

## **Donations**

Please remember that if you are not able to attend services in person, you can donate what you would have put in the collection via CAFDonate. Gift Aid can be added if you are a UK taxpayer.

You can either follow the Donations link on our website [www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk](http://www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk) or go directly to <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/12556>

## **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 contact me, either by emailing [newsletter@rivingtonchapel.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@rivingtonchapel.org.uk) or phoning 01942 816569.

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 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

04 May	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
18 May	Larry Bode - Dean Row Chapel
01 Jun	Chrissie Wilkie - Dean Row Chapel
15 Jun	Congregational Service
06 Jul	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
20 Jul	Rev Lynne Readett - Chowbent Chapel
03 Aug	Jean Clements - Denton Chapel

### Flower Donors

04 May	Sarah, Rose and Ros Williams
18 May	Jacqueline Dagnall
01 Jun	Judith Crompton
15 Jun	Jacqui & Tim Kershaw
06 Jul	Frank Ascroft
20 Jul	Jacqui & Tim Kershaw
03 Aug	Elsie Kent

## Other Dates and Ceremonies

Sun 2 May      Congregational Committee Meeting  
After service

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If you would like to arrange a ceremony at Rivington  
Chapel, please contact Alison or Vince  
Contact details overleaf

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**Copy date for next issue:    1 Jul 2025**

**Issue date:                      20 Jul 2025**

send to:    Alison Whitaker, 14 Church Street, Westhoughton, Bolton,  
                 BL5 3RS

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.

Lay Person in Charge & Pulpit Supply	Vince McCully 20 Thirlmere Close, Anderton, Lancashire, PR6 9QD 01257 483733 email: laycharge@rivingtonchapel.org.uk	
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