When I first went to St. John’s back in 1985, I could never have imagined I would one day be ordained, let alone - even more incredibly - become the vicar of the church! It feels like the greatest possible privilege to be entrusted with accompanying this Christian community on its continuing journey of faith. Three months in, I can say, without qualification, that I have already noticed the difference between my former role and my new one...but I have at least survived my first Christmas!

I applied for this job because I think St. John’s has real potential to develop its life and ministry within the context of both the Richmond Team and the local community it seeks to serve. The premises are impressive, with generally good facilities used by a variety of groups throughout the week. The church is strategically located, close to the station and bus stops, and on a busy road used by hundreds of people every day. Our neighbours include the Metropolitan Police, SPEAR, Falcons School, the Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond Adult Community College (where I taught for 25 years) and, more recently, notonthehighstreet.com.

I aim to make the church building more open and accessible to the local community during the week, in line with one of the main aims of our Team’s Mission Action Plan. To that end, I am in the process of making the narthex my office base, and already have a laptop and telephone. I’m currently awaiting the printer and Office software, but it will all soon be up and running. I am already finding all sorts of people coming in, sometimes to pray, or light a candle, or just sit quietly, or to talk about something on their mind. I have specifically allocated Tuesday mornings for availability, but am around at various other times as well. If the doors are open and the ‘welcome’ board is outside, do pop in!

It is crucial for me that St. John’s is known as an inclusive church in which anyone can find a warm welcome. The Anglican Catholic tradition has sometimes been perceived as rather exclusive and inward looking, but a truly catholic approach implies the greatest possible embrace to all who are seeking meaning and purpose in life, and a community where they can belong. Anything that enhances that sense of community is to be welcomed.

Central to my own perception of my ministry is an open and questioning...
I don’t know which day of the week Audrey was born, but it must have been a Friday. As we all know, Friday’s child is loving and giving, and Audrey’s life is full of both.

When I first met Audrey Hancock at St John the Divine she told me that she visited elderly people in a care home near where she lives, taking freshly baked cakes for tea two or three times a week. Baking is one of her many gifts and other people lucky enough to receive her cakes and pies include her son’s club and the Saturday volunteers at St John’s. A couple of years ago Audrey bought a book of cookery for diabetics so that she could make cakes especially for one of the vulnerable people who comes to our church most Saturday mornings.

On Saturdays there is plenty of work to be done in the church. Audrey is on the flower rota, and will turn her hand to any cleaning task: removing wax from candle sticks, polishing the wood panelling and chairs, washing up. But her speciality is cleaning brass and silver. As everyone knows, we have plenty of candle sticks, and thuribels which need a lot of cleaning!

What’s unusual about that? All churches have ladies who arrange flowers and clean the brass. But this is just for starters.

Over the past couple of years Audrey has single-handedly (or I should say with both hands) raised many hundreds of pounds towards the restoration of the Lady Chapel.

It all began when we were given boxes and bags full of unfinished needlework after Petra Pailin died. Audrey was intrigued by dozens of small knitted shapes which she found. After some detective work on the internet, she and her son identified the patterns which had been used. So, they put the pieces together (rather like a jigsaw puzzle), and Audrey was able to complete a number of Humpty Dumpty toys! These were snapped up at one of our pre-Christmas sales.

Another early work was a rather splendid nativity scene. This was the beginning of Audrey’s ‘toy factory’. She found more and more patterns for knitted toys - dolls, teddies, clowns and wonderful animals, and started selling them to friends, neighbours and local schools and nurseries. Her small mascots to clip onto school bags are very popular and make good party gifts. And all the proceeds come to the church.

Earlier this year she was knitting in a hospital waiting room and seeing this, her consultant and other members of his department commissioned toys. Her favourite was a meerkat, dressed in green scrubs which the surgeon uses when he is talking to children in the ward about their operations.

Audrey is always happy to receive left-over wool to continue her work.

FROM THE FIRST WORLD WAR MAGAZINES

Reverend Max Binney

March 1915

'The War presses very heavily on us. It is impossible I think, not to feel that a great depression rests upon the spirits of us all. It is not due to any uncertainty as to the issue. It is due rather to the losses of men and the waste of wealth and the transformation of circumstances. The old sense of security is passing out of our lives.'

'The churchwardens and I have felt obliged to insure the churches against possible damage by aircraft. We have taken this step very reluctantly because we think that the contingency is so remote'
theological approach, undergirded by strong liturgical, pastoral and prayerful foundations. With my English teaching background, you won’t be surprised to know I am especially appreciative of literary and poetic approaches to faith in helping to say something resonant about the divine mystery we call God.

I’d like to see further enhancement of our ministry to younger members of the church, more opportunities for people of all ages to get to know each other in both ‘religious’ and social contexts, and much more active participation of the wider congregation in the various aspects of church life which help to sustain our ongoing mission and ministry, week in, week out.

Finally, I am delighted to be a vicar in a team, rather than a single parish. I value highly my continuing involvement in both St. Mary Magdalene and St. Matthias, and also the opportunities to work with such committed clerical and lay colleagues.

Photographs by Paul Bunnage

WWW VIGIL SERVICE

In a year which commemorated the beginning of the First World War in 1914, a Vigil Service was held at St Mary Magdalene on the evening of Remembrance Sunday 9 November to remember those who had died in that war. Through a combination of music, scripture, prayer and remembrance the congregation reflected on the failure of the human spirit that led to the slide into war with all its consequences. The human cost was all too sadly illustrated from research carried out by Valerie Boyes which told the stories of some of the names on the war memorial inside St Mary’s including the three Burt Brothers, George Henry, Arthur Edward and William James, two of whom died within a couple of months of each other. The service also included a prayer in German read by Jutta Raftery, which had been read in Westminster Abbey on 4 August at the vigil there to commemorate the outbreak of the First World War. All 114 names on the memorial were read out following which the congregation left poppies underneath. Finally the tolling bell was rung 114 times and everyone left in silence, conscious of the enormity of the losses from the war.

‘Thus says the LORD:
A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping
Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more’

Jeremiah 31.5

THE FUTURE AT ST JOHN THE DIVINE - continued

Rvd Neil Summers
St Matthias held another very successful Christmas Fayre on Saturday 15 November from 10 - 4 pm with a wide range of attractions. These included external craft stalls selling jewellery, artwork, gift cards, Christmas gifts and the services of a photographer together with several stalls run by charities including Cancer Research. St Matthias also had its own cake and home produce stall, a tombola and a handmade craft stall for sewn, knitted or crocheted items. The local scout group 1st Richmond Scouts ran a stall, as they do every year. For the peckish there was plenty to eat including a lunch of pumpkin soup and cheese scones made by Gill Doling. During the day visitors could take trips up the tower, that notable local landmark which is 195 feet high, or take part in a tour of the church conducted by Paul Velluet.

The Fayre raised the excellent sum of £2,146 thanks to all the hard work of those who helped both in advance and on the day. This year’s Fayre will take place on Saturday 14 November so put that date in your diary now!

EAGLETS

Eaglets was started by a former RTM Ministry Assistant, Beth Lewis. It is a Team initiative aimed at parent/carers and young children: the adults chat and have a cup of tea while the children play. It takes place in the narthex at St John’s on Tuesdays from 2.00-4.00 pm and contributes towards an important aim of the Team’s Mission Action Plan to put our churches at the centre of the community. We urgently need more volunteers from all three churches to join the rota. It would entail one two hour slot every few weeks. The work is not difficult: talking to those who come, making a drink, washing up a few cups etc. Please offer your services to your Team Vicar.
In April 2014 a programme of restoration for the Lady Chapel furnishings at St John’s was instigated. Of primary concern was the central painted panel in the reredos which had become badly affected by extensive blooming to the ‘varnish layer’ caused by moisture encroachment; this has been fully restored by cleaning to its original condition. The statues of the saints and the gilding of the main structure have also been restored, the work being completed in July 2014. In conjunction with this, the statue of Our Lady has been cleaned along with the stained glass panels by Mabel Esplin in the south wall. This work was undertaken by the well respected firm of church interior decorators and conservators Howell and Bellion. In addition the east window by Christopher Whall has been cleaned by Chapel Studio Stained Glass Ltd. £20,000 has so far been raised for the restoration project, mainly from donations and sales, and it is expected that the screen gates to the chapel will also be restored in the near future.

RESTORATION OF THE LADY CHAPEL FURNISHINGS

Paul Bunnage
PCC
Richmond Team Ministry
Parochial Church Council
Elspeth Fearn

PCC MEETINGS

PCC met in September and November and as usual discussed a variety of topics including the important one of RTM’s Mission Action Plan (MAP). Throughout 2014 much work had been carried out by both PCC and the Church Committees on developing the plan’s priorities of our churches being at the centre of our community, embracing people of all ages and enhancing our ministries of welcome and pastoral care. At the PCC meeting in September the final wording of the MAP was approved by PCC. It is important that the MAP should not be ‘top down’ and so many of the activities contained in it were therefore delegated to the individual Church Committees to take forward and develop. The MAP would be reviewed each year including at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

At the September meeting PCC were given information about the rebuilding project at St Mary’s, the options and the proposed way forward. They will be more formally involved (approval of faculties applications etc) at a later stage. This meeting also discussed the pattern of PCC meetings and following a two year experiment with five meetings a year, decided to revert to four a year but with timed agendas and a starting time of 7.30 pm rather than 8 pm.

Following discussions at the Standing Committee Away Morning, PCC at its November meeting considered the possibility of paid Children’s Ministry leadership in the Team. It also heard with interest about the Richmond Passion performance taking place on Good Friday 2015 with a large cast drawn from the Richmond churches, including RTM, with music, a choir and a procession through the town to the Riverside. PCC agreed that in order to accommodate the Richmond Passion, RTM’s Good Friday Liturgy would begin an hour later at 3 pm rather than at 2pm. Finally PCC learnt about the Cinnamon Faith Action scheme which is a nationwide initiative to establish the practical difference that Christian churches and organisations could make to their communities. Currently a Faith Action audit is being trialled in some 50 towns including Richmond.

On Wednesday 10 December the first Richmond Business and Retail Association (RBRA) Carol Service was held at St Mary’s. RBRA is a group of business owners and retail traders who aim to promote Richmond as a vibrant, attractive and prosperous town. The service consisted of well known carols and lessons and was followed by refreshments of mulled wine and mince pies. Around 100 people had attended the service and feedback was very positive with St Mary’s being described as really welcoming to the business community. Next year the organisers hope for even more businesses to be represented and to bring together a choir for the occasion.

The Deputy Mayor of Richmond, Councillor Peter Buckwell, was invited to the service and speaking to Team Talk said:

'I was delighted to be invited to the first Richmond Business and Retail Association Carol Service, the result of an initiative by the Association to celebrate Christmas in this manner and it was good to see it so well supported. My wife and I received a warm welcome to our beautiful parish church which in Richmond is at the heart of the community. Christmas is a special time and as a Christian myself it means much to me to see the Church reaching out to our citizens and forging new links with different sections of the community and I am happy to support this where I can. Congratulations to the organisers for a successful first effort, to Canon Robert Titley of the Team Ministry and to Councillor Pamela Fleming. We look forward to it becoming a regular feature of Christmas in Richmond.'

REACHING OUT TO THE COMMUNITY

On Wednesday 10 December the first Richmond Business and Retail Association (RBRA) Carol Service was held at St Mary’s. RBRA is a group of business owners and retail traders who aim to promote Richmond as a vibrant, attractive and prosperous town. The service consisted of well known carols and lessons and was followed by refreshments of mulled wine and mince pies. Around 100 people had attended the service and feedback was very positive with St Mary’s being described as really welcoming to the business community. Next year the organisers hope for even more businesses to be represented and to bring together a choir for the occasion.

The Deputy Mayor of Richmond, Councillor Peter Buckwell, was invited to the service and speaking to Team Talk said:

'I was delighted to be invited to the first Richmond Business and Retail Association Carol Service, the result of an initiative by the Association to celebrate Christmas in this manner and it was good to see it so well supported. My wife and I received a warm welcome to our beautiful parish church which in Richmond is at the heart of the community. Christmas is a special time and as a Christian myself it means much to me to see the Church reaching out to our citizens and forging new links with different sections of the community and I am happy to support this where I can. Congratulations to the organisers for a successful first effort, to Canon Robert Titley of the Team Ministry and to Councillor Pamela Fleming. We look forward to it becoming a regular feature of Christmas in Richmond.'

As Team Talk went to press, we heard the sad news of the death of Miss Valerie Booth aged 90, who was formerly a sacristan at St Matthias for some 40 years. She will be much missed.

VALERIE BOOTH

As Team Talk went to press, we heard the sad news of the death of Miss Valerie Booth aged 90, who was formerly a sacristan at St Matthias for some 40 years. She will be much missed.
BOOK REVIEW

By Alan Sykes


Many readers of Team Talk will know Ruth Scott personally. For those who don’t, Ruth was a curate in the Richmond Team Ministry for 8 years and still lives locally. She was in fact one of the first women to be ordained in the Church of England. That was in 1994 but times have moved on and she is now a member of the Quakers.

In The Power of Imperfection Ruth is ‘mapping out a little of the landscape of human messiness’. She herself admits that she has few, if any, answers to the questions that this ‘quagmire of experience throws up’. That may be because each person, being in a unique situation, must find a unique way forward. One thing she is quite sure of: there is no such thing as perfection in human life. As she puts it: ‘Perfection is an illusion. It does not exist because life is dynamic, while perfection has nowhere else to go’. I for one certainly wouldn’t argue with that statement.

Perhaps the key passage in the book, at least for me, is when Ruth expounds some ideas about the Parable of the Sower, when some seed falls on stony ground, some among weeds and some on good soil. Once again let the author speak for herself: ‘...it suddenly struck me that the good soil is nothing more than muck and decomposing compost in which good things can take root, grow and flourish’. In other words, if we react well to the things we do wrong and think wrong, we can grow in understanding of ourselves and in compassion for others. And if we have real compassion for others, then our actions will become more loving. This is the power of imperfection.

Ruth gives many illustrations of how messy and yet, growing from that messiness, how ethically positive our lives can be. She draws on current affairs and on her professional work in various spheres. I was fascinated by her experiences as a school chaplain. Teenagers in many ways exemplify life in the raw. They haven’t yet learned the stratagems with which older people mask their real selves. More unusually, Ruth draws illustrations too from her family life and she’s quite open about her own shortcomings. I found it strangely disconcerting and yet vividly real to hear an author in a published work talk about people I actually know.

Many years ago I remember Ruth preaching a particular sermon at St Mary’s. To be honest, I can’t even remember what it was about, but I remember feeling slightly disappointed afterwards. The reason for my disappointment was that I agreed with every word she’d said. I just didn’t feel that it had stretched me. Not Ruth’s fault of course. I didn’t have that feeling with The Power of Imperfection. It’s a book that gently and charitably encourages its readers to look at themselves as they really are – but not in a way that leads to despair but in a way that leads us to greater understanding, compassion and love. If a book can do that, then in my view it qualifies as not half bad.
WHO’S WHO?

**Team Rector and Vicar, St Mary Magdalene:** The Revd Canon Dr Robert Titley  
T: 020 8940 0362  E: robert.titley@richmondteamministry.org

**Team Vicar, St Matthias:** The Revd David Gardiner  
T: 020 8948 7217  E: david.gardiner@richmondteamministry.org

**Team Vicar, St John the Divine:** The Revd Neil Summers  
T: 020 8892 8313  E: neil.summers@richmondteamministry.org

**Curate (Self Supporting Minister):**  
Revd Alan Sykes  T: 020 8549 3887  E: alan.sykes@richmondteamministry.org

**Readers:**  
Ruth Martin  T: 020 8948 4458  E: ruthmartin255@btinternet.com  
Gill Doling  T: 020 8948 5175  E: gilldoling@hotmail.co.uk

**Southwark Pastoral Auxiliaries (SPAs):**  
Jenny Powell-Smith  T: 020 8940 3949  E: chrispowellsmith@gmail.com  
Sue Eastaugh  T: 020 8943 9137  E: sue@eastaugh.net

**Parish Administrator:** Teresa Cross, Parish Office, The Vicarage, Ormond Road, Richmond TW10 6TH  
T: 020 8940 0362  E: teresa.cross@richmondteamministry.org

**Interim Bookings Administrator:** Sarah Gardiner  
T: 020 8940 6390  E: bookings@richmondteamministry.org

**Safeguarding:** Team & St Mary’s: Judy Wright  T: 020 8940 5786  E: judytwright@dsl.pipex.com  
St Matthias: Barbara Adamson  T: 020 8940 6390  E: barbara.adamson@richmondteamministry.org  
St John’s, children: Fiona Morgan  E: morganfamilyisleworth@hotmail.co.uk  
St John’s, adults: Luke Daxon  E: ldaxon@yahoo.co.uk

**TEAMtalk Editorial Board:** Marc Cranfield-Adams, Elspeth Fearn, Penny Francis, Heather Montford, John Owen-Davies, Mary Ricketts, Richard Rondel, Alan Sykes.  
Any enquiries/comments  E: teamtalk@richmondteamministry.org

**Website:** richmondteamministry.org  **Webmaster:** Robert Kealey  E: webmaster@richmondteamministry.org

© Richmond Team Ministry Unauthorised reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited without written permission from the Editorial Board. Manuscripts, photographs and artwork are accepted on the basis that TEAMtalk does not accept liability for loss or damage to them. Any items subject to copyright are included with the owner’s consent. Views expressed in TEAMtalk are not necessarily those of the PCC of the Richmond Team Ministry