The first women priests in the Church of England were ordained in 1994. I like to think that I was very much on board with this then novelty. Even so I remember the culture shock when I first heard Ruth take Evensong. The female voice, though perfectly in tune, didn’t seem quite right in the responses and the collects because custom had made me used to a male voice in such a context.

Now, custom can sometimes – often even – unify people. Custom can also – sometimes – be a dead weight. And in this instance it had closed my mind to a new possibility. I’ve since got over it. A new custom soon replaces the old.

Ruth was very much part of the new possibility that the ordination of women brought to the Church. She too was ordained in 1994.

Ruth and Chris first came to Richmond in 1989. Chris became chaplain to the almshouses and Ruth began to worship at St Mary’s. On being ordained she was appointed curate in the Richmond Team Ministry. She stayed with us for seven years, before leaving to devote herself to her many other endeavours.
Ruth Scott through her rich, varied and spiritual life has left a variety of legacies to us. Not least have been her theological books including 'The Power of Imperfection' and 'Casting Off'.

That legacy continues because there is one further book by Ruth to come and which arose out of her experiences when she was so ill in 2018. Living with all the challenges of her medical treatment and facing the reality that her life was going to be shorter than expected, she explored through literature, poetry and song what life was about and what was important.

This last book 'Between Living and Dying: Voices from the Edge of Experience' will be published in paperback by Birlinn Ltd on 8 August this year.

But that brief résumé doesn’t tell the half of it – or even a quarter of the effect she had on the life of this parish. It doesn’t give an idea of an eighth of the energy and imagination she was able to bring to her wide-ranging ministry.

Ruth did all the things you’d expect. There was no skimping on the basics. She was pastorally sensitive and active. She was a good listener, genuinely and consistently interested in people. She supported several parishioners pastorally, but knew her boundaries.

She was a thoughtful and sensitive preacher, but her sermons could be challenging as well as gently encouraging. She was full of compassion for those in difficult places but unafraid to criticise spiritual mediocrity and unafraid to criticise the Church and scripture if she felt they deserved it. She never lacked courage. Authority could raise her hackles.

Her preaching was inventive and vivid. She used lots of props. Who can forget the balloon and the knitting needle? It went like this ... ah, but I don’t have time to explain.

She brought her own experience to bear in her preaching and in her wider ministry, and specifically a woman’s and a mother’s perspective. She wasn’t a gender-neutral priest. We were looking for new insights and we got them.

It was probably inevitable that Ruth would move on from Richmond Team Ministry as she wasn’t one to stand still and was always open to new possibilities for the Church and for herself. She trained in mime and clowning, she began her work as a broadcaster, she began her interfaith work – all of which she did with great distinction and she found time to obtain a 1st class honours degree in theology from the University of Roehampton. There was no stopping her need for exploration.

A very important factor in her achievements however was the vast and unfailing support given by Chris, in every possible way. With Ruth and Chris both serving locally as priests, Richmond was indeed very fortunate.

**Ruth’s New Book**

Ruth Scott through her rich, varied and spiritual life has left a variety of legacies to us. Not least have been her theological books including 'The Power of Imperfection' and 'Casting Off'.

That legacy continues because there is one further book by Ruth to come and which arose out of her experiences when she was so ill in 2018. Living with all the challenges of her medical treatment and facing the reality that her life was going to be shorter than expected, she explored through literature, poetry and song what life was about and what was important.

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Refugees in Jordan - A Lost Generation?

by Elizabeth McDowall

The desert area in the East of Jordan swelters in the summer, and freezes in the winter. It's here that many of the 1.2 million refugees from Syria eke out some kind of living. Only 20% of them live in refugee camps, while 80% manage as best they can, renting poor quality accommodation or living in tents and shacks.

Children suffer most in the aftermath of war, and the plight of young Syrian refugees (as well as many young Iraqis) is miserable. There are few educational opportunities and many have never been to school at all. Illiterate and without any hope of improving themselves, they are indeed "a lost generation".

*Helping Refugees in Jordan* is a network of Jordanian based small initiatives set up by a British aid worker, Catherine Ashcroft, who has worked for the UN and other international aid agencies. She supplies food boxes to hard pressed families, and helps them to set up small businesses. She has also helped to found and fund two inspirational schools for refugee children in Jordan: the Hope School near Amman, and the Azraq School in the desert region of the east.

In the Hope School, most of the pupils are of primary age. It’s become a joyful centre for their parents too, giving them a sense of hope for the future.

The Azraq School works with harder-to-reach older children. They’re a lively bunch. When you’re 12 and you’ve never been to school, never even learned to sit still on a bench, it’s hard to get started. And if you’ve seen things no child should see, and your father disappeared in the war, and you haven’t had anything for breakfast, it’s harder still. The teachers in the Azraq School are heroic. They really are.

The original Azraq School compound was nothing but a few portable cabins on a stretch of dusty ground with a noisy airbase nearby. The children didn’t even look up as the bombers took off and flew overhead. Now, with the help of great supporters (like many in the Richmond Team Ministry!) HRJ has found the funds to build a second compound with tailor made school buildings in local materials, with light airy classrooms and special spaces for music and art, which help to prepare traumatised children for the discipline of learning.

Catherine and all her workers are unpaid volunteers and they’re able to respond very quickly to families in need where they find them. They have linked up with the Mandala Trust, a small UK charity through whom they can claim Gift Aid on donations. Like HRJ in Jordan, the Mandala Trust is run by volunteers, so every penny goes to the charity.

There has been fantastic support from all three churches in our parish, and huge thanks go to those who are generously sponsoring individual families, or donating regularly by direct debit. If you’d like to make a contribution, contact Di Bligh on info@mandalatrust.org to ask how to donate and apply for Gift Aid.

*Helping Refugees in Jordan is one of the beneficiaries of RTM’s Away Giving Programme.*
‘Clipping’ the Church
St Matthias re-introduces an old English tradition on Mothering Sunday
by Revd Anne Crawford

As the Church grapples with the challenge of making its ancient liturgy relevant to a new generation, it was good to be able to re-introduce one of the Church’s oldest liturgical traditions at St Matthias this year: ‘Clipping the Church’ was once an annual feature of church life, with the congregation usually gathering on Mothering Sunday or on the church’s Patronal Festival to encircle the church building and thank God for all the blessings of Mother Church. It’s a tradition I took part in as a child in Yorkshire, all the Sunday school children joining hands and dancing around the mother church which had given birth to our faith, before going back inside to hand out posies of flowers to our own mothers and grandmothers. It seemed a shame to lose such a powerful expression of community and belonging, and so this year I decided to revive the tradition at St Matthias as part of our Mothering Sunday worship.

The word ‘clipping’ derives from the Anglo-Saxon word ‘clyppan’ which means to embrace or clasp. The idea is that the whole congregation gathers outside the church building joining hands and literally encircling and embracing the church in a ring of prayer. At St Matthias we processed out into the churchyard singing a hymn (Bind Us Together), and then, once we were all gathered in a long line around the outside of the building, we joined hands and faced in towards the building for the first prayer. We asked God to bless us as we worked together to be the Church, the body of Christ, serving his people in this part of Richmond.

The procession encircles St Matthias
Natalie Nesbitt

We then turned outwards towards the community, and still clasping hands we asked God to bless the people we serve, the people we live alongside.

We caused quite a stir among our neighbours, with lots of them peering out of their windows or coming out on to the pavement to see what all the fuss was about and taking photos. It was a great way to make the Church more visible, literally, and to show that coming to church and being together can be fun! We were joined on Mothering Sunday by the beavers, cubs and scouts, and they loved the chance to be outside and to do something very different. It surprised their parents that this wasn’t something new the church was introducing but an ancient act of blessing the Mother Church and thanking God for the life of faith she gives birth to and continues to nurture throughout our lives. It is a tradition well worth reviving.

Faith at Home Workshop - 18 May 2019

We enjoyed an inspiring and creative day with Victoria Beech of GodVenture. The group began by thinking about their family and used playdough to represent this. We went on to consider the importance and value of Ritual, for all ages, within our own families. We thought about what we could apply to our own worship time, both as individuals and as family, being mindful of being inclusive of all. In the afternoon we looked at a model of faith as; trusting, believing, imagining and doing. We experienced different ways of praying creatively and sharing Bible stories. It was a useful time and one lady commented on how she found that, for her, using fewer words was really ‘freeing’ as she prayed that afternoon and she found it to be quite a revelation. It was a day well spent which gave us lots to reflect on. Thanks to all who supported, attended and prayed.
What the Children did during Lent and Easter
by Helen Williams

As we draw towards the close of the Easter season, we look back at Lent and Easter for our children & young people. Special highlights included:

Our March SevenUp, with a Lenten focus. We were considering resources available to help us prepare for Easter. We also made bread rolls to raise money for GlassDoor Homeless Charity and sold them at St. John’s the following Sunday. Thanks for everyone’s generous support.

The April SevenUp session took the form of an alternative ‘Stations of the Cross’, out and about in Richmond town. It got us moving about and thinking about lots of elements of Jesus’ final journey to the cross. We shared the reading, the activity and prayers at each station.

On Mothering Sunday First Richmond Scouts joined us at St. Matthias and we enjoyed the act of ‘clipping the church’ together (See Revd Anne Crawford’s article).

The Passover Supper was scaled down this year as St Mary’s was hosting and we were struggling to find a suitable space with sufficient capacity to hold this special event, as we had in previous years. We used the Parish Office for the meal, which included a special liturgy and remembrance of the Passover. It was excellent to join the adults for some of the Maundy Thursday service down at St. Mary’s and the young people really valued the foot washing – a very special moment, prompting great conversations. The young people slept in the Vicarage Basement, while down at the Church the adults kept watch at the overnight vigil in the Lady Chapel. We joined in for the close of the vigil the next morning.

Finally we celebrated on Easter Sunday with children attending the various services and especially enjoying the Easter Egg Hunts!

“Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia!”

Thank you to everyone for your support and care and prayers.
Book Review:

*Ships of Heaven: The Private Life of British Cathedrals*

by Christopher Somerville

Christopher Somerville is the distinguished travel writer and walking correspondent of The Times with 42 books to his name. He has always been interested in cathedrals since, as a small boy, he looked up at the facade of Wells Cathedral and lost his balance falling over! His latest book covers some 17 of the 100 or so Cathedrals in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The title of the book stems from the impression that cathedrals often give, soaring high over ancient towns like giant tankers or cargo ships.

The book includes Salisbury Cathedral where our former Rector, Canon Robert Titley, is now Canon Treasurer. Christopher discusses with Robert the importance of art in the cathedral, both the ancient works of art and also exhibitions of modern artworks, which Salisbury is currently renowned for. As Robert comments 'Art is absolutely fundamental to a cathedral. It's what this place is about: moments of creative surprise.'

Christopher Somerville is not just concerned with the history of the cathedrals or talking to members of the clergy. He is particularly interested in the workers, both paid and volunteers, who keep the cathedrals running daily, who carefully look after the often extremely vulnerable fabric, who meet and welcome all the visitors. So he talks to the Clerks of Works, to the glaziers, to the stonemasons, the archivists, guides and the welcomers.

He visits under supervision the bell ringing chamber at Lincoln, inside the spire at Salisbury and also finds out that at the Chapter House at York, 70 feet high and 60 feet across, a huge unsupported space, the ceiling is cleverly made of wood not stone. The insight of the craftsmen is very illuminating. The master stonemason at St David's Cathedral in Pembrokeshire advises Christopher that masons can tell the type of stone just by the taste of the dust when the stone is worked. There are meetings with the Broderers at Durham, expert ecclesiastical embroiders who work on vestments, hangings and altar frontals and also with the 'Holy Dusters' of Salisbury Cathedral who clean all the monuments with great care every week.

What is important is not just all this work on maintaining and keeping the cathedrals going but also the important pastoral role with those who come to the cathedral, often vulnerable, seeking peace or refuge and a space to reflect. The book highlights as well the role that cathedrals play in alleviating traumas, for example, the two Cathedrals in Liverpool, Anglican and Roman Catholic, who have worked together tirelessly with the families of the Hillsborough disaster.

This is all against a background in which cathedral attendance for worship is increasing year on year, including by many young people. Christopher Somerville’s book is a welcome companion for those who wish to know more about these national treasures, which show so magnificently, the glory of God.

Elspeth Fearn

'Ships of Heaven' was published earlier this year by Doubleday  ISBN 9789857523648
## RTM’s Away Giving 2018

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<tr>
<th>Church Overseas</th>
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<th>Grants Secular Societies (Overseas)</th>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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### Grants Home Missions & Church Societies

| Church Urban Fund | 1,400 | 5  | | SPEAR | 500 | 2  |
| Diocesan Southwark - Knife Crime | 1,000 | 4  | | Douglas House | 100 | 0  |
| Welcare | 3,040 | 11 | | React | 200 | 1  |
| Vineyard Project (Community Centre) | 2,000 | 7  | | Richmond Good Neighbours | 150 | 1  |
| The Fishermens Mission | 300 | 1  | | Fitzroy Support (Silver Birches) | 200 | 1  |
| Inclusive Church | 150 | 1  | | Cochlear Implanted Childrens Support Group (CICS) | 150 | 1  |
| Affirming Catholicism | 100 | 0  | | Me Too & Co | 400 | 1  |
| Kick London | 200 | 1  | | INS | 400 | 1  |
| The Pilgrimage Trust | 560 | 2  | | Otakar Kraus Trust Music | 150 | 1  |
| Hounslow Night Shelter Project | 250 | 1  | | Richmond Foodbank | 200 | 1  |
| Richmond Glass Door | 250 | 1  | | Caring Café | 250 | 1  |
| **TOTAL** | **2,700** | **10** | | **OVERSEAS** | **15,400** | **56** |
| **HOME** | **11,950** | **44** | | **CHURCH BASED** | **22,750** | **83** |
| **SECULAR** | **4,600** | **17** | | | | |

### On the Brow of Richmond Hill

On the Brow of Richmond Hill
Which Europe scarce can parallel,
Every eye such wonders fill to view the present round;
Where the silver Thames does glide,
And stately courts are edified,
Meadows deck’d in summer’s pride
With verdant beauties crown’d

Lovely Cynthia passing by
With brighter glories blest my eye,
Ah, then in vain said I,
The fields and flow’rs do shine,
Nature in this charming place
Created pleasure in excess,
But all are poor to Cynthia’s face,
Whose features are divine.

Thomas D’Urfy  1653-1723
Wit, poet and dramatist, whose works include ‘The Richmond Heiress or a Woman Once in the Right’.
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Our Churches

St John the Divine
St Mary Magdalene
St Matthias