



Inside this issue:

Robert Stanier's Installation Service

<i>Robert Stanier's Installation Service</i>	1-3
<i>Alpha Course at St John the Divine</i>	3-4
<i>Art Exhibition at St Matthias</i>	5-6
<i>Richmond Piano Series</i>	7-8
<i>Epiphany Tea at St Mary Magdalene</i>	8-9
<i>Goodbye to Ruth</i>	10-13
<i>A Poem by Sylvia Browning</i>	13
<i>The English Hymnal</i>	14-15
<i>From Our Front Gardens</i>	15
<i>Richmond Team Ministry</i>	16



Robert speaking to the congregation

On the evening of 22 February at St Mary Magdalene, the Revd Robert Stanier was instituted and inducted as the Interim Team Rector of Richmond Team Ministry and Vicar of St Mary Magdalene by the Rt Revd Dr Martin Gainsborough, Bishop of Kingston and the Venerable Bridget

Shepherd, Archdeacon of Wandsworth. Following the retirement of Revd Canon Wilma Roest in November 2024, the interregnum had lasted quite a while - for 415 days - so it was with great joy that RTM welcomed Robert's arrival. The church, not surprisingly, was very full for this new

chapter in the Team's history. After the Gospel reading and the sermon, which was given by Bishop Martin, the service moved into the legal formalities.

... continued on page 2

Robert Stanier's Installation Service - continued



Robert with the Bishop



The Bishop, Robert and the RTM Churchwardens

Kings College Cambridge are the Patron of Richmond Team Ministry and a representative of the College formally presented Robert to the Bishop to be Interim Rector and Vicar of St Mary Magdalene. The Archdeacon administered firstly the Declaration of Assent. in which a new incumbent commits to upholding the faith, history and practices of the Church of England. This was followed by the Oath of Allegiance to the reigning monarch, his heirs and successors and finally by the Oath Of

Canonical Obedience, a declaration of loyalty to the diocesan bishop, first made at a priest's ordination and then at each subsequent new appointment. Kneeling before the Bishop. Robert received the cure of souls as Rector and Vicar and the Bishop's blessing. Then, after processing to the back of the church the Archdeacon ceremonially placed Robert's hand on the handle of the west door signifying his taking possession of the church. Robert also tolled the church bell, an old



Ringing the Bell

Photos by Sisi Burn



Robert with Anne and Joe after the service



The Mayor of Richmond greets the new incumbent

custom, which was originally to inform parishioners that the new incumbent had arrived. This was from the days when most parishioners would not have been present at the actual

service. Robert was then formally welcomed by the six churchwardens of RTM and community leaders including the Mayor of Richmond. Councillor Penny Frost and also

faith and other representatives after which the service continued with the Eucharist. Finally, refreshments were served to the congregation which

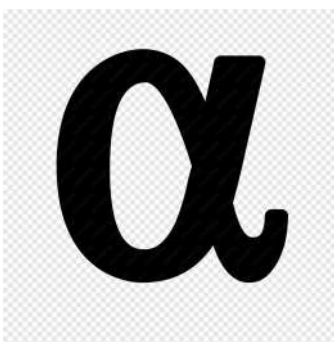
included many guests, rounding off what had been a very special evening.

Exploring Faith Together: The Richmond Team Ministry Alpha Course, Autumn 2025

Revd Joe Moore

In the autumn of 2025, and ending in December, the Richmond Team Ministry hosted a new Alpha course based at St John's, welcoming people from across our churches and the wider community to explore the Christian faith in an open, friendly, and hospitable environment. Alpha is designed as a space where anyone - whether curious, questioning, or returning to faith after many years - can come and ask life's big questions. It is not a course that assumes prior knowledge or commitment. Instead, it offers an invitation: come, listen, share, and explore.

At its heart, Alpha is about conversation. The



The Greek letter alpha

course is open to anyone: those who would describe themselves as having no faith at all, those who have drifted away from church, those exploring Christianity for the first time, and those who simply want to revisit the foundations of belief. In a world where many people carry deep spiritual questions but few places feel safe enough to ask them, Alpha provides a gentle and intentional space where curiosity is welcomed.

One of the defining features of our Alpha course was the practice of radical hospitality. Each evening began not with a lecture or presentation, but with a shared meal. And not just any meal - each week our wonderful volunteers prepared an incredible spread of food that quickly became a highlight of the evening. Tables were set, (electronic) candles lit, and the room filled with conversation and laughter as people arrived after



busy days at work or home.

The meal itself was an important part of the experience. It offered an opportunity for people to slow down, relax, and connect with one another. Over delicious mains and truly memorable desserts, people shared stories about their week, their lives, and what had brought them to Alpha in the first place. For many participants, this time around the table helped create a sense of community and belonging even before the more structured parts of the evening began.

After dinner we would watch a short film exploring a key question about the Christian faith. Each session focused on a different theme: Who is Jesus?, Why did Jesus die?, How and why should I pray?, and How does God guide us?, among others. Yet the real heart of Alpha came after the film, when we gathered into small groups for discussion. These groups created space for open and honest conversation. Participants were encouraged to share their reactions, raise questions, or even voice doubts and disagreements.

Nothing was off-limits. In fact, Alpha thrives precisely because it allows people to speak freely and listen carefully to one another. The films presented the Christian story in a thoughtful and accessible way, drawing together theology, personal stories, and everyday experience.

For many, these conversations proved to be the most meaningful part of the evening. People discovered that they were not alone in their questions. Others found that articulating their thoughts about faith - perhaps for the first time - helped them to reflect more deeply on what they believed and why. The small group environment fostered trust and mutual respect, allowing participants to explore faith

without pressure.

What was particularly wonderful about the Richmond Team Ministry Alpha course was the way it brought together people from across our three churches: St Mary Magdalene, St Matthias, and St John the Divine.

Volunteers, hosts, helpers, cooks, and participants came from across the Team and beyond, working together to create something larger than any single congregation could do alone. It was a powerful expression of shared mission. Uniting across the Team in the active communication of the Christian faith is, after all, at the very heart of what we are here to do.

For the Richmond Team

Ministry, running Alpha is part of our response to the calling given to the Church by Jesus himself. At the end of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus gives what is often called the Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28.19). This command is not about imposing belief, but about sharing the good news of God's love revealed in Jesus Christ.

Alpha is one way in which we seek to live out that calling. By creating an intentional space where people can encounter the Christian story, ask questions, and experience genuine

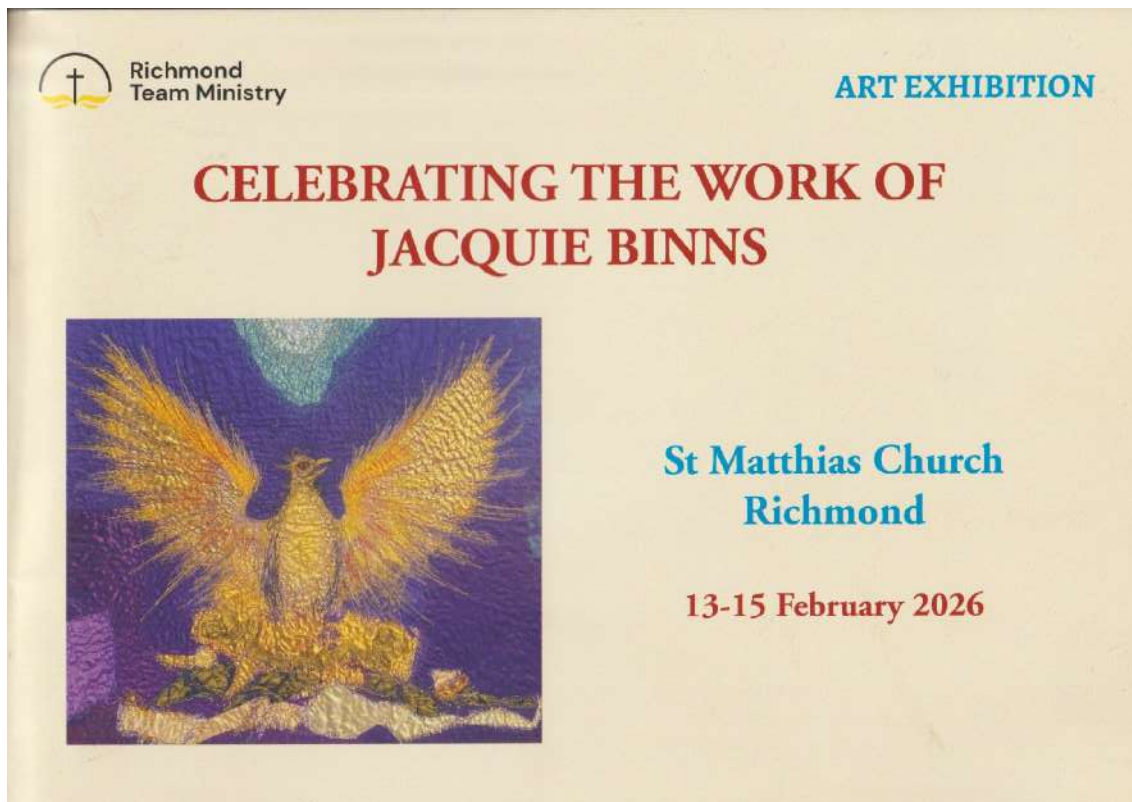
community, we hope to offer a glimpse of the life of faith. It is a gentle but profound form of evangelism - one rooted not in argument, but in relationship, hospitality, and conversation. The autumn 2025 course was a wonderful reminder that the Christian faith continues to spark curiosity and hope in people's lives. Through shared meals, thoughtful discussion, and the courage to ask big questions, Alpha offered participants the opportunity to explore what it might mean to follow Jesus today - and to do so together.



Interior of Holy Trinity Church, Brompton, London - wikimedia John Salmon geograph.org

The Alpha course began in Britain in 1977 and was originally run by a curate at Holy Trinity Church, Brompton, the Revd Charles Marnham, and designed as a course for church members on the basics of Christian belief. Later the course was taken forward by the Revd Nicky Gumbel, also a curate at Holy Trinity, who revised and expanded the course. Today Alpha courses are now run for some 37 million people in 175 countries and in over 100 languages. The course is held by various Christian denominations across the world - Anglicans. Presbyterians. Lutherans. Baptists. Methodists, Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. Alpha is also active in schools, workplaces, homes and prisons. The name Alpha was adopted for the course as it was aimed at those beginning a new life in Christ and Alpha is the letter which begins the Greek alphabet, generally regarded as the language in which the New Testament was first written.

Art Exhibition at St Matthias



Exhibition Catalogue with Pheonix 2007 on the front

15 February saw the patronal festival of St Matthias, including a sermon by Lord Harries of Pentregarth, the former Bishop of Oxford from 1987 - 2006, and author of several landmark books which explain ethics and religion in relation to modern society. In addition, over the same weekend St Matthias held a fascinating art exhibition in the church celebrating 40 years of work by Jacquie Binns, the renowned British ecclesiastical embroiderer, textile artist and sculptor. Trained at Goldsmiths College, London she has a large body of work of

ecclesiastical commissions from churches, cathedrals, chapels and other bodies and institutions all around the country. Notably Jacquie designed the pall covering the coffin of King Richard III at his reburial service at Leicester Cathedral in 2015. The king's body had been found in 2012 buried in a car park in Leicester thought to be on the site of Greyfriars Church to which the dead Richard had been brought from Bosworth, the site of the last significant battle of the Wars of the Roses. Palls made of velvet or other expensive fabrics were common in medieval times for high

status individuals such as kings and aristocrats and it was customary to have representations of people, with whom they were connected, embroidered

on the side of the pall. Richard III's reburial pall can be seen on display in Leicester Cathedral and includes figures from Richard's lifetime and also some of the modern



St Matthias Altar Cloth 2023



St Alban 2008. The first Christian martyr in England. Jacquie also designed a cope, the Alban cope for St Albans Cathedral

archaeologists and historians responsible for the excavation and reburial. Ecclesiastical textiles include altar frontals, wall hangings, stoles, copes, chasubles, and banners. Maquettes were some of the works on display in the church. A maquette is a small scale model, a sort of rough draft which shows what the textile work or sculpture will look like and which can be used to develop ideas, forms and thoughts about colours, materials and textures. Displaying all the exhibition works in a real church rather than in an art gallery really added to their context and interest. A steady stream of visitors came to see the exhibition over the three days that it was open and some met Jacquie who was there, to discuss her works. An important item in situ was the altar

frontal for the St Matthias nave altar, which Jacquie designed in 2023. It is an imagined landscape but which features St Matthias church, its steeple and also Richmond Hill and the Park. This frontal which was made of velvet, silk, metallic fabric and satin has been much admired. In her foreword to the exhibition catalogue the Revd Anne Crawford, who has known Jacquie for over 20 years, wrote. 'Through embroidery, paint and sculpture, Jacquie's art enables us to engage with Scripture in imaginative ways, it makes the invisible visible so that theology is not just understood intellectually but felt emotionally and spiritually'. Sadly, Lord Harries died at the end of April. RIP.

Photos by Elspeth Fearn



The White Hart 2019 inspired by the Wilton Diptych a 14th century altarpiece belonging to Richard II. The hart was his personal emblem



Lazarus 2009 sculpture; His burial shrouds falling in a gentle arc as he returns to life



The London Skyline 2917 Maquette for an altar frontal at the church of All Hallows by the Tower of London

Concert at St Mary Magdalene welcoming the new piano

For many years a baby grand Bluthner piano stood in St Mary's being used at various events, concerts and some services. Sadly, however, in recent times it had not been at its best so would not be able to cope with the wider range of music-making that the St Mary Magdalene Music Foundation wished to see, both at the church and providing concert facilities in Richmond generally. There was also a desire to offer educational programmes and workshops to inspire the next generation of young musicians. These aims were also set against the changed demands of St Mary's building itself following its reordering in 2018-19 which opened up more spaces. Different spaces mean different acoustics, which a more powerful piano could make the most of. Consulting with the experts at Coach House Pianos, a Steinway Model D grand piano, originally built in 2001, was identified which was undergoing restoration by the firm and which the team from Richmond liked for its tone and playability and decided was the right one for St Mary's. The Steinway Model D has an extremely high level of craftsmanship and is a favourite piano amongst concert pianists.

The cost of the restored piano was £100,000 and an appeal was launched in March 2025 with varying levels of donation – Concert, Sonata and Etude. Or you could sponsor an individual piano key. (There are 52 white keys and 36 black keys on a Steinway.}. Or you could make a donation of any amount – all were very welcome – and using the Government's Gift Aid scheme donations could be increased by 25% at no extra cost to the donor. There was a great deal of enthusiasm for the project and the funds were raised very quickly by the end of summer 2025 with the restored piano arriving in December. To welcome the new piano to St Mary's and RTM, the Richmond Piano Series, a series of concerts in 2026 was announced under the description 'World Class Concerts in the heart of historic Richmond'. The first concert in the series took place on the evening of 13 March and was completely sold out. It featured the distinguished concert pianist Joanna MacGregor CBE, who, over a long and illustrious career has played with many leading orchestras and toured widely abroad and has appeared at the Proms several times. Joanna is Chair of Piano at



Concert Programme

the Royal Academy of Music, is a regular broadcaster on TV and radio and has been a judge on the 2026 BBC Young Musician of the Year Competition. Before playing each piece Joanna would give details about it to the audience. The concert began with *Kneeplay No 4* and *Etude No 6* by Philip Glass the minimalist composer. Then by contrast three pieces by the French Baroque composers Rameau and Couperin, all

originally written for harpsichord, and all of which referred to birds and birdsong. This bird theme was picked up again in one of a group of works by Franz Liszt, which ended the first half of the concert, in the piece *St Francis d'Assise La Predication aux oiseaux* played largely in the upper registers of the keyboard. Then by contrast *Funerailles S, 173, No 7* composed by Liszt as an elegy to those who died in the

Hungarian Revolution of 1848, and written with extensive crashing chords in the bass register. After the interval Joanna played the complete work Pictures at an Exhibition written by the Russian composer Modest Mussorgsky. This was a piano suite in ten movements interspersed with variations on a promenade theme, and which describes musically a tour of an art exhibition at the Imperial Academy of Art in St Petersburg. Finally Joanna finished the evening with some encores, showing further the richness both of the

restored piano and piano repertoire. The whole concert was a bravura and dazzling kaleidoscope of piano techniques, colours, emotions and moods. The audience were left stunned but delighted with admiration at this very powerful performance and gave long and appreciative applause to Joanna. The Steinway piano, first constructed in 2001, has been restored superbly and this summer there continues to be a feast of music at St Mary's including the recent very successful second concert on 3 May by Roderick



During the Concert - Sisi Burn

Williams and Christopher Glynn on English song.

Concerts can be booked on Eventbrite

Epiphany Tea at St Mary Magdalene



The tea party was very popular - Anthony Bell

The weeks after Christmas can feel a bit miserable – dark and dank and with the added bonus this year of endless rain. So it was cheering that on Saturday 10 January at 3 pm a special Epiphany Tea was held at St Mary Magdalene to which everyone was welcome - you just had to RSVP to help the organisers estimate the number of cakes etc needed. There was a good turnout and full tables. Tea was served in porcelain china cups and there were scones, jam, cream and plates of cakes - a traditional afternoon tea brought to the table with a smile. Musical entertainment was also provided for guests to listen to as they ate, with several songs sung by Margot who is a member of the Children's Choir and at the piano Andreana who is Assistant Organist

at St Mary's.

At the end of the tea party participants were able to take home a little present pack of a card and a small flower bulb to be planted and nourished, which was a lovely gesture.

Speaking to Team Talk, Nicky Holt who had organised the event said - *'The idea behind the Epiphany Tea was to bring everyone together for a few hours of conversation and cake, to allow people to meet new friends, chat with old friends and experience some epiphany joy during the dark days of January. We wanted it to be a gentle, relaxed affair where people would feel welcomed and looked after and would have a chance maybe to get to know a few new faces. I was delighted so many were willing to turn out on a raw*



Lots of tasty cakes - Maia Rushby

winter's afternoon. Huge thanks go to Ros and Judy for helping me set up the day before, to Shirley for lending us her gorgeous china, to Andreana and Margot for providing such beautiful, uplifting music, and to the amazing team of volunteers who baked, served and washed up with grace and good cheer. We hope, all being

well, to repeat the event next year.'

Nicky - Huge thanks also go to you for organising this uplifting event.



Enjoying the tea - Maia Rushby

Goodbye to Ruth

Ruth Martin's connection with St Mary Magdalene and Richmond Team Ministry has lasted for the best part of a total of 33 years, split into two separate periods as Ruth lived away from Richmond for several years part way through that time. For the last 15 years Ruth has been a Reader in the Church of England and attached to RTM as such. In recognition of her day job as Diocesan Secretary of Southwark Diocese she was appointed a Lay Canon at Southwark Cathedral. Later she retired as Diocesan Secretary in autumn 2023 but continued with some work for the diocese before fully retiring. During the interregnum, Ruth managed the RTM office and its staff and also acted as RTM's Treasurer for a while. Her last services were the 9.30 Eucharist on 15 February and Evensong on the same day. At the morning service Ruth was presented with a very generous gift and also flowers showing the congregation's



Ruth, Robert, Anne and Joe just before the Induction Service - Sisi Burn

appreciation for all that Ruth had brought to St Mary's and RTM, a sentiment reflected in everyone then singing 'For She's A Jolly Good Fellow'. However, that was not Ruth's last appearance as she had been given the task of organising Robert Stanier's Installation and Induction Service on 22 February and arranged it all so well – a very special service. It was not just

Ruth's work and role in our churches that mattered. She managed in the last year to go on the Camino de Santiago de Compostella and to complete this challenging journey. Here in Richmond one of the many activities she was involved in was as a member of the Richmond Street Pastors, an organisation in which volunteers from local churches, working in

teams, provide practical help and support to those that need it on the Friday and Saturday night time streets in the town. We will miss you a great deal Ruth but you are not going far away. All the best for this new stage of your life and worship at St Anne's Kew and our love, thanks and prayers go with you.

Ruth's Reflections on her Faith and her time in RTM

In discussion with Elspeth Fearn, the Editor of Team Talk, just after Ruth left RTM

E Ruth, you and I go back a long way. I first met you in 1992 when we were Junior Church leaders at St Mary's. The leaders

worked in pairs, and we were put on the rota together. The beginning of a long and happy friendship as we hit it off right away. As well as

teaching, the leaders also made up the Mothering Sunday posies. hid chocolate creme eggs for the Easter Sunday Egg Hunt, assembled the

Christingle oranges and prepared the children to perform the Nativity play on Christmas Eve. I look back fondly on all those experiences. Teaching and



George Herbert Poet 1593 - 1633'

guiding the younger members of our congregation on their journey of faith was an immense privilege. What do you think are the special qualities of Children's Ministry and what the children give you in return?

R I think it is important to respect children's views, to enjoy being with them. As adults we can learn so much from the open hearts that children

have. I have found primary school age children believe in God in a very natural way and so enabling them to learn more about Jesus is a joy and we need to be humble and nurturing. For older children and teenagers I have found discussing current affairs in the light of faith, and being willing to try to answer really difficult questions is a skill that they respect, so being open to their views

and ideas too. We all need encouragement but I think it is a duty to encourage our children and young people and celebrate their presence in church.

E You made the significant decision to become a Reader some years ago - a special form of lay ministry. What qualities do you consider that Readers can bring to the life and worship of a church and its congregation?

R As lay ministers we are amongst fellow parishioners and so being with the church family is crucial; when preaching it must always be about 'us', not 'you' ! Readers and lay ministers have generally emerged from within the church family and stay for many years so they can give particular support during a vacancy time and it has been a privilege for me to do so. Lay ministers have a distinctive opportunity to be supportive of their parish clergy, assisting

them and trying to enable their distinctive ministry to flourish. Our clergy leaders do of course change from time to time and I have found it important to be a loyal colleague and to be flexible in support.

I was drawn to go further after co-chairing Christians at Work, realising that Readers can continue their secular careers and offer more to the church too, and I have tried to enable these two aspects, work and ministry, to be brought together. I was working

in financial regulation when I became a Reader but I had had an earlier career developing and training adults in higher education so teaching and preaching ministry was attractive. Julian encouraged me, and Robert Titley suggested I apply to become Diocesan Secretary a few years after I had become a Reader. I will always be grateful to both of them for their early development and support of my Reader ministry and the support I have had from colleagues in the Richmond Team.

E Some people do not realise that Readers can take funerals. You wrote in the weekly RTM newsletter for 12 February about an elderly man living alone in most destitute conditions and who was very ill. How all the neighbours found out and looked after him for months, cooking, cleaning and caring. After he then died in hospital, all these loving people then came



Ruth with the late Gill Doling Reader, and the Revd David Adamson at Gill's retirement service

for his funeral, which you conducted. So he had a good and dignified send off and was remembered as an individual person and not a problem. I kept re-reading your account of this and was struck by the immense love from ordinary people who did not want to make a fuss but wanted to care for him and did so. It must have been a privilege as with all funerals to conduct his funeral and to meet all who had cared for him.

R Yes. It is a privilege to work so closely with a family at such significant life events. Sometimes when death is imminent you can be alongside someone in prayer as they want to set out what is important to them in their farewell to family and friends. Sometimes, as with that gentleman, you are undertaking a service for a person unknown in the church community but living in the parish and for whom it was important to have a Church of England funeral. I always try to make sure I have learned about the person and ask to have a photograph as I prepare the service. Funeral ministry is important and I think the new Archbishop of Canterbury is going to bring pastoral ministry, including funeral ministry much more to the fore. Readers need to take a specific course post Licensing which takes about 12 months including practical assignments before they can take funerals on their own.

E I know the ministry of preaching and sermons is very important to you. How do you prepare when writing and giving a sermon. What do you feel are important reflections and messages to give to people listening?

R Most people in church want to hear something that they can take away and ponder on further, with a view to a practical application. We all know the Diocesan vision is 'Christ Centred, Outward Focused' which is what we all want to try and live out in our lives. Having an open heart and being willing to challenge ourselves. I use the scriptures of the day as the starting point of preparation and will generally use several books, commentaries, poetry. I tend to have what I think are the key messages in my head for about a week before I set anything down and then prepare a draft. I am a very early riser and so on the Sunday I take stock of the news and then review my draft and finalise it. I memorise the key messages. I was once preaching at St John the Divine in the morning, when Neil Summers was the vicar, and then preaching at St Mary Magdalene in the evening. I had carefully printed both sermons but when I reached St John the Divine I realised I had brought the evening sermon. Neil was willing to change the readings to help me but all went well as I knew the key messages and I didn't need to keep looking



The West front of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostella where the Camino ends - Wikimedia Creative Commons.

down at a piece of paper. However, from that day on I have always used my iPad which has a bright pink cover!

E You introduced me to the works of the metaphysical poet George Herbert (1593-1633) for which I am very grateful. A man who died just under four hundred years ago and yet whose poetry speaks to us in a singular way that surprisingly connects so much to modern readers and our very different world. His distinctive and immensely modest style on the surface of what he wrote, contrasts with the deeper meaning and spirituality to be found within his words as you study and think about them. Often on rereading his poems, there are new

insights, and new conclusions to be found. What have the words of George Herbert meant to you and your faith?

R When I was 12, at school I was asked to read George Herbert's poem Love (Love bade me welcome but my soul drew back, guilty of dust and sin) at an assembly the following week. I have always needed to understand what I am learning. I was not very good at all in learning by rote, so I read and read this poem until I felt I understood it and I recall it as my first significant step in my personal faith. I understood from that time that God's Love is available to anyone and everyone, that we need to be honest with God,

particularly of our own shortcomings and willing to say sorry for them before God. It was quite a message for a 12 year old! Since then the layers of that poem and many others by George Herbert continue to give me and so many others helpful insights as we seek

to be people of faith. Sue Eastaugh also loves poetry and we both led some sessions on George Herbert at Advent a year or so ago and I remember us leading workshops together, Sue myself and you Elspeth, for older children quite a

few years ago now. Ruth said in conclusion 'Life as people of faith is a pilgrimage with many turnings. I will always be grateful for my long time as a parishioner at St Mary Magdalene in the Richmond Team Ministry, and as a Reader for the Team -

remembering also the late Gill Doling, fellow Team Reader. I feel very blessed at the opportunities I have had to share God's word, and to receive it and learn from others, many of whom I can call my friends.'

April Sun

A poem by Sylvia Browning

Sunblinds flap and people hurry,
Coffee cups in hand,
Tousled hair, sunglasses on -
Like summer just begun -
Flimsy tops and soft blue jeans,
Floppy hats, tote bags,
Suntanned skin
Chilled water bottles,
Ice cream chimes ring out.

Holidays and swimming pools
Palm trees by the sea
Basking beside turquoise water,
Dreaming lazily,
Yellow sandy beaches,
Secret, hidden caves,
Sheltered from the ocean breezes
And the crashing waves.

Sylvia Browning April 8 2026
Copyright Sylvia Browning 2026



Bournemouth Beach - Wikimedia Creative Commons (Photograph Lewis Hubert)

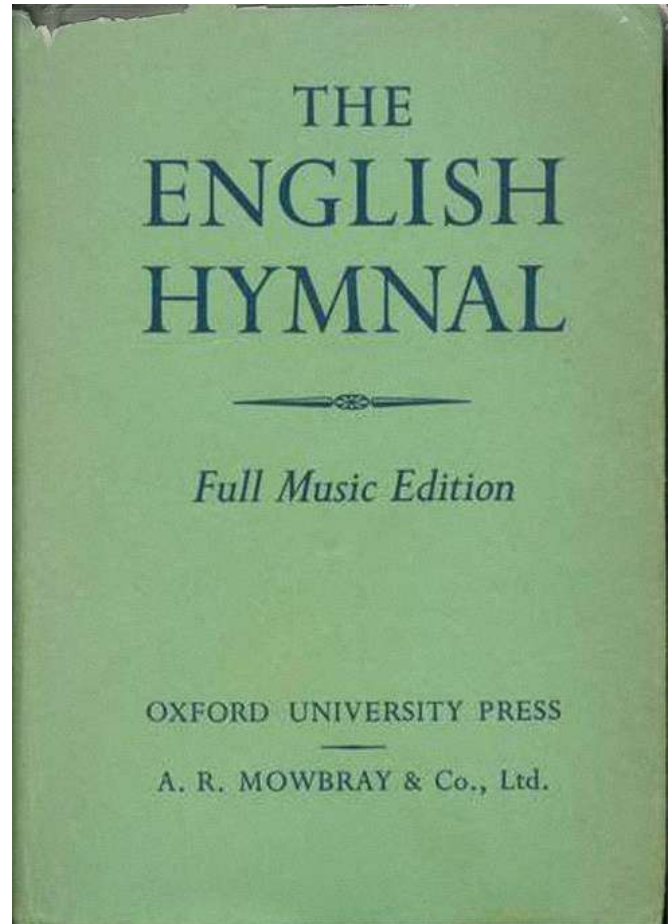
Ralph Vaughan Williams and The English Hymnal

Elspeth Fearn

In 1906, a seismic event in the history of hymnody took place with the publication on Ascension Day of a new hymn book, the English Hymnal, intended for use in the Church of England and published by the Oxford University Press. It aimed to provide a more dynamic and much broader alternative to existing hymn books such as Hymns Ancient and Modern. The authors stated that they wanted to use the best hymns in the English language. The Hymnal was instigated by the Revd Percy Dearmer an Anglican priest, lifelong socialist and seeker after social justice. He wanted to bring together Anglo Catholic liturgical practices with the native English tradition and the Hymnal was to be part of this work. Dearmer approached Ralph Vaughan Williams (RVW), then an up and coming composer and invited him to become the Musical Director. RVW looked to various sources for the music. He had in the early 1900s along with contemporaries here and in Europe such as Holst, Sharp, Bartok and Dvorak collected folk tunes and songs from the modest inhabitants of rural communities, noting down tunes as they were sung to him. He viewed these melodies as a good option for the English

Hymnal giving a bright and cheerful flavour to the hymns. Altogether 30 English folk tunes were used in the Hymnal, being given names after the villages and countryside where he had first heard them. For example *Tune - Sussex - Father Hear the Prayer We offer*, *Tune - Monksgate - He Who Would True Valiant Be* and *Tune - Shipston - Firmly I believe and Truly*. There are for some today issues of cultural appropriation with the way the tunes were gathered but it should be recognised that these tunes would almost certainly have disappeared completely had they not been recorded when they were.

As well as folk tunes other melodies were used from Europe and beyond. *Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones* uses the German tune *Lasst Uns Erfreuen* from 1623 and America contributed Quaker hymns. Gustav Holst donated his arrangement of Christina Rossetti poem's *In the Bleak Midwinter*. Not least, RVW himself composed hymns such as *For All the Saints*, *Come Down O love Divine* and *The King of Love my Shepherd* is. Whilst the book was being prepared new hymns and tunes were tried out at Dearmer's church, St Mary's Primrose Hill, as part of the services there.



When the Hymnal was first published it did not, however, have a very good reception from certain members of the Church of England. In particular the Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson (the longest serving Archbishop since the Reformation) wanted every parish in the Canterbury diocese to reject the Hymnal. There were objections to the Anglo Catholic tone of the book, the wording used and in particular the commemoration of saints and their invocation in prayer, all resulting in a

great deal of argument. The Oxford University Press as a compromise published an edition which omitted five controversial hymns (I have not been able to identify them.). One suspects that a more minor reason for the initial unpopularity was also that both Dearmer and RVW were under the age of 40 when the Hymnal was published and were perhaps seen as young upstarts. (It is interesting how opinions changed over time as at the end of their lives both Dearmer and RVW had their ashes buried with honour in Westminster

Abbey.)
Despite this inauspicious beginning the English Hymnal survived, was widely adopted and has made a huge contribution to church music and congregational singing. It is structured around the rhythm of the liturgical year and the original edition contained over 1000 thin pages. New editions appeared in 1933 and 1986 and finally in

November 2023 when .after a very extensive review, the Revised English Hymnal was published. The former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams wrote in the Foreword 'The purpose of a good hymn is to seek to reflect the demands that the revealed trust and beauty of God places upon us and is not simply to mirror what we are

already comfortable with.'. A service was held at the time of the launch in St Mary's Church, Paddington in 2023 and is available on You Tube. The service contains much information on the review, the history and reasons for certain decisions and the congregation also sang some of the hymns from the Hymnal. It can be

found at [The Revised English Hymnal launch event Wednesday 29th November \(youtube.com\)](#)
Long many the English Hymnal last.

From our Front Gardens



Richmond Team Ministry - Who's Who?

Team Rector and Vicar, St Mary Magdalene:

The Revd Robert Stanier
E: rector@richmondteamministry.org

Team Vicar, St Matthias:

The Revd Anne Crawford
T: 020 8940 7462
E: anne.crawford@richmondteamministry.org

Team Vicar, St John the Divine:

The Revd Joe Moore
E: joe.moore@richmondteamministry.org

Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary (SPA):

Sue Eastaugh
T: 020 8943 9137
E: sue@eastaugh.net

Verger:

James Nicholson
T: 07739 975666
E: verger@richmondteamministry.org

Parish Administrator:

John Palmer
T: 020 8940 0362
E: admin@richmondteamministry.org

Bookings Administrator:

Denise Mahoney
T: 020 8940 4905
E: bookings@richmondteamministry.org

Safeguarding:

Jo Kitson
T: 07880 500528
E: safeguardingSMM@richmondteamministry.org

TEAMtalk Editorial Board:

Elspeth Fearn (Editor), Heather Montford, Mary Ricketts
E: teamtalk@richmondteamministry.org

Website: richmondteamministry.org

Our Churches

