

GENERAL MEETING

Old Church Rooms on Monday 17th June 2019 at 7.30pm

Present: David Silver [Chairman], Nick Hawkins (Secretary), David Cargill (Treasurer), Eric Blackwell, Allan Cook, Bob Roberts, Cllrs Rod McKerlich, David Suthers and Ralph Vaughan, and 42 members.

Apologies: Tom Evans [Vice Chairman], Raymond Rlvron, Ian Thomas, Julie Davies, Ellis Jenkins, Anne Silver, Mike & Pat Williams.

Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Rev'd Vicki Burrows: *'My journey to becoming Vicar of Radyr'*

The Chairman introduced Rev'd Burrows. He noted that Vicki had taken up the post of the new Vicar of Radyr in February, and also given quite a bit of biographical information in the latest edition of Radyr Chain. On that basis he felt a detailed introduction was unnecessary and he was more than happy for Vicki to take up the story from there.

Rev'd Burrows started with the disarming statement that she felt 'under qualified' for job she now had. In her youth she had had to go to elocution lessons, had been 'fired' from the Girl Guides for being naughty, was notably tongue-tied in front of the public, and was not brought up in a religious family. In fact, she still did not regard herself as 'religious'. She gave a lot of details about her upbringing - the daughter of a Jewish immigrant (her father) and a mother who came from a wealthy horse racing family (and was also a model). Her father had come to England in 1912 with his family following the Pogroms in Poland. They all came with nothing but he and his siblings all became successful businessmen, her father setting up an haute couture dressmaking business in central London. He met Vicki's mother when she came to work for him as a model. They got married when he was 50 and she was in her early 20s. As her mother was not of the Jewish faith, her father was cast out of his family for marrying out of the faith; as a result, religion was a taboo subject.

Vicki was born in London in 1961. If she had been a boy she would have been brought up Jewish. Eventually, though, the family was reconciled, her mother became a much loved daughter-in-law and her childhood memories were of Jewish family occasions. She went to a posh private school where formal education was not seen as important; she did not enjoy it and recalled lessons of needlework and cookery. Living in Epsom near to the racecourse, she related getting up at 5am to ride horses then going to school and looking out of the window. She did not concentrate too much at O level but achieved 2As and a B at A level and then decided not to pursue further education. Her father wanted her to join the family business so she went on a book keeping course and learnt shorthand and typing. However she then went to work with the jockey Geoff Lewis both in the office and as a 'work rider'. But, after a short while, she 'came to her senses' and joined the family business when she realised and accepted that women were, in those days, only amateur jockeys and there were no future career prospects for a young woman.

She met her husband-to-be Billy on a skiing holiday in Kitzbuhel and they were married in 1984 in St Giles' Church, Ashted. She felt at the time an increasing sense that there was 'something else' in life and was influenced by the 'ladies of the Church' who participated in the eight-session marriage course she and Billy were required to attend. They were so nice. Why would they spend their time doing that?

Vicki and Billy set up their first home in Norwich and she felt compelled to join the local church. At that time she was commuting daily to the family business in London and spent the time reading the bible. The Old Testament was familiar from her Jewish childhood, but the New Testament was a revelation, with its values of caring for social justice, looking after the weakest - the teachings of Jesus. She was confirmed in Norwich Cathedral when pregnant with her first child.

Eventually the family moved back to Epsom where she joined the local church, St Martin's. The Vicar asked her to take over a slightly run-down Sunday School and, 15 years later, it had 50 children and she was taking a lead in church activities. She was also coming under pressure to consider ordination, but she felt she was unfit. She had no skills, no knowledge, and was no good at public speaking. On top of that, all the vicars she knew were male, old, academic, grey and boring.

However, one Sunday after Easter, she heard the words in the Gospel of the Risen Christ to St Peter "feed my sheep". This was a turning point: she agreed and was selected for ordination training.

Her first post, after ordination and serving her curacy period, was as Rector in Long Ditton in Surrey for seven years. In that time she saw a growth in the weekly congregation from 60 to 198, much as a result of the work she initiated into all sorts of functions for the young and the elderly. Her success was noted and she was put on the 'preferment list' and invited to attend the 'Leading Women' course run by Rev'd June Osborne (who was to become Bishop of Llandaff). However, she had no ambition to be an archdeacon or a canon, etc; she wanted to remain a Parish Priest and was then appointed Vicar at Royal Wootton Bassett and Rural Dean of Calne. She returned to Surrey to serve in Bramley and Grafham following the injury of her youngest son and was tempted by (the now) Bishop June to apply for Radyr soon after she realised she had completed the role to which she had been called: Bishop June suggested this was an 'exciting opportunity'. It was made clear that there could be no preferment in the selection, but she was successful anyway.

In conclusion, that was her journey from wayward girl to the Christian Faith, to the position she now holds. She is delighted to be here and to take on that 'exciting opportunity' suggested by Bishop June.

There was only one question for Vicki at the end of her talk - what did she see as the main challenges in her new position? Her response was that, from a Diocesan perspective, the Parish was doing quite well. However, when she considered that the population of Radyr, Morganstown and Danescourt probably exceeds 10,000, she was saddened that so few came regularly to church. There is a huge opportunity for growth and she wants to rebuild the churches as centres of the Community. That will happen in time; 'faith is caught not taught' is her maxim and she has lots of ideas to build the Christian presence in the Community, as she did in Long Ditton. She gave one example - she is building a relationship with the Radyr Medical Practice. They have a need for more space for activities to serve the local population. She is happy for them to use the New Schoolrooms for such purposes. In fact, she hopes the Parish buildings will eventually be used primarily to serve the Community.

At the close of the talk, the Chairman thanked Rev'd Vicki for giving such a good insight into her journey and for doing so with such good humour. He noted that, at the start of her talk, she had said she was under qualified to be Vicar of the Parish of Radyr but that everything she had said, and the way she had said it, showed exactly the opposite. As an expression of thanks from the Association, he presented her with a rose bush for planting in the newly refurbished Rectory garden. Most appropriately, the rose is named 'Rambling Rector'!

Minutes of the previous General Meeting on 11th February 2019

The minutes were approved. There were no matters arising.

Report on the May Festival

The Chairman noted that the Festival had gone very well. There had been 32 events, the weather had been kind and all the concerts and the play well attended. The Concert in the Parc had been a great success and the three 'bouncers' insisted on by the licensing police for our own protection had been totally superfluous. At the final concert given by Amici the nominated Charity for the year 'Action for Children' had been presented with a cheque for £10,000 being the amount known to have been raised over the year by the R&M Community at that time. The final amount (which would be greater) would be known in mid-July when all the sums had been completed.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer, David Cargill, started by thanking Bob Roberts for all the work he had done during the Festival, during which he would have counted over £15,000 of takings! He also echoed the report made by the Chairman regarding the amount that would eventually go to Action for Children but thought the total would be nearer £11,000.

He noted that the Association had done well from the Festival, with net income being around £1800. This included generous sponsorship from both Plasdŵr and Redrow. However, much of that has been and would be spent on the purchase of essential new equipment (including a loud hailer, gazebos, replacement tables for the old trestles, new BBQ, etc) as well as paying for an insurance policy which the Association been required to take out. The Association's current reserves stood at £12,400. There were no questions.

Community Website

The Chairman informed the meeting that the Community Website (radyr.org.uk) had been transferred back to the ownership of the R&M Community Council following the resignation of the original Webteam. Following discussions, that website and the associated domains had now been transferred into the ownership of the Association, and the R&MCC now had their own independent website (radyrandmorganstown.org). It was early days for the Association ownership but the aim was to make the site more active, with more News items and more interaction with local groups. He noted that the Association also ran the Festival website the Facebook page, RadyrandmorganstownHub plus a Twitter account. Between them, the Hub and Twitter accounts were currently receiving about 50K views per month and the main website 20K. That meant that, overall, Association material was being viewed 70K times per month. He encouraged all local organisations to use the website and Facebook pages to promote their presence and their events. The Association was very happy to provide advice if required.

It was also noted that Old Church Rooms bookings, currently done via the main website, would be transferred to the R&MCC website on 1st September, where a new system (Hallmaster) had been established.

General R&M Matters

The Chairman reported that planning for next year's May Festival, which would run from 2nd-17th May, had already started. One complexity was the very recently announced change to the date of the Bank Holiday from Monday to the following Friday. This would result in some changes but all the usual events would be present, together with some new ones. The Charity nominated for the forthcoming year (which starts in July) is Tenovus.

The Association was also thinking about Charities following Tenovus. Discussions were taking place with the 'British Heart Foundation' and 'Headway' and the hope was one or both of these organisations would be adopted from 20/21 on.

The Secretary reported that a request had been received from a group who were seeking crowdfunding for a refurbished play area in Parc Radur. Funding had already been offered by both Cardiff Council and the Community Council (amongst others) but the fund was still short by up to £2500. The Association Executive had agreed to donate £250 to the appeal. In response to a question concerning the timing of the replacement equipment, Cllr McKerlich said that one of the problems of the old equipment was that it had rusted due the lack of drainage beneath the play area. Plans were in place to provide more drainage, after which it would be possible to install the new equipment.

Entertainment

In the absence of Ian Thomas, the Chairman reported that the Film club would be starting a new series of films in the autumn. Any ideas for suitable films should be communicated to Ian on RadyrFilms@gmail.com.

Any other business

Nothing raised.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Monday, 23rd September 2019 commencing at 19.30 in the OCR. The speaker will be Raymond Rivron who will be talking about the history of Radyr Woods).