

Richmond and Twickenham Times Profile

Written by Hannah Farquharson

I have a skill that can help someone create life. A career change that left a St Margarets mother with needles in her hands is helping to create life. After working in the travel industry and having three children Hilary Haynes decided to retrain in Chinese medicine and is now helping couples with their fertility through acupuncture. As I walked into the entrance of the Galen Naturopathic Clinic in Sheen Road the smell of aromatherapy oils hit me and I was greeted by an array of bottles and books in a very comfortable environment. "To help a person get pregnant is fantastic," she says. "As a mother I don't see why I should be the only one standing by a rugby pitch, I would do anything to help someone have that." Ten years ago, when Hilary and her family moved back to England after living in Brussels and Paris, she decided it was time to retrain.

"I was in a cranial osteopaths office watching what they were doing," she explains. "I was a mother and as my children grew I knew I would retrain. I started studying when my son was at school and had to be very focused in doing my exams." Hilary, 48, originally planned to study osteopathy at Kingston University but when the course was cancelled she decided to explore Chinese medicine and in 1996 completed her acupuncture training at the South West College of Oriental medicine. She followed that with a Post-Graduate diploma of China at Shanghai University at the Gynaecology unit of the Chinese teaching hospital. "There were rooms full of people with needles in them. People were queueing outside with needles in them. It was amazing to watch them in action," says Hilary of her time at the hospital. Following her career change Hilary and her husband Peter returned to their roots, moving to St Margarets having grown up in Richmond and Hampton respectively. "As a child I remember going to look at sticklebacks in Crane Park, doing athletics at Thames Valley Grammar School, trampolining and swimming," recalls Hilary. Twickenham baths is where I learned to swim, my mother took me after school every week and I never realised she couldn't swim. I also remember skating in the skating rink which unfortunately is no more." With strong family links in the area - her mother Margaret Brown a member of Richmond Parish Church and her parents-in-law John and Joan Haynes having run Adams of Hampton for 30 years - Joan is still very involved in the Hampton community, "I have memories of a happy childhood and having travelled a lot and lived in Brussels and Paris, I appreciate what I have here - a combination of history, facilities and ease of getting into London. It is a green lung." Hilary was educated at the Vineyard School from the age of eight and remembers appearing in the Richmond and Twickenham Times dressed in Victorian costume celebrating the school's centenary. She went on to study at Thames Valley Grammar School and started dating a Hampton boy, now her husband, at the age of 15. Describing herself as mature and confident Hilary explained that at the age of 21, working in marketing for Air France, she ran trips to Mauritius and New York, having only ever been as far as Spain before. In 1980 she married financial director Peter and they left for Brussels on the day of their daughter's second birthday, their first child. The family remained in Waterloo for six years and Hilary's first son, now 18, was born there. They then moved to Paris where they lived for 18 months and Hilary's love for learning was reignited. "When we were in Paris I did a course on Parisian architecture," says Hilary. "I loved it. We studied it in the classroom and the next week we went out and saw it. It was fascinating. She says: "A European outlook is very much part of the family. For me I always wanted my children to swim and speak French." Returning to England Hilary was pregnant with her third child. After qualifying as an acupuncturist Hilary worked with a member of the Great Britain hockey team at Kingston University. "There were various people with different things coming in," explains Hilary. "I helped a couple of people get pregnant - it was part of the general practice. Then I did some locum work and that was interesting." The experience sparked something inside Hilary and she moved into naturopathy but continued her acupuncture work. She worked in Harley Street with leading acupuncturist Zeta West, gaining experience with IVF pregnancy before joining the clinic in Richmond. All three members of staff at the clinic are naturopaths and Hilary specifically works in fertility, pregnancy and gynaecology, giving advice on diet and lifestyle. "It is complementary to western medicine," she explains. "The three of us work as a team. I like being able to do the best I can for the patient." "I am learning all the time. I am lucky to have worked with the number one American Chinese medicine specialist in fertility, Dr Randine Lewis and her team." Hilary's love for learning has seen her complete a course in Chinese patent and herbs at the University of Westminster and Naturopathy at the College for Naturopathic and complementary medicine in 2002. "People like me are willing to keep learning, to do the best we can for our patients. Ultimately I want a full time healthy baby," she says. "Relaxing makes a big impact. Every couple is different. I work with sperm specialists and fertility clinics." As well as working at the clinic and in Harley Street, Hilary also links up with Queen Mary's Hospital in Roehampton, working with patients undergoing IVF. "I can help people have a healthy pregnancy," says Hilary who was unaware of any of the advice when she had her three children. "I try and get them as fit as possible by advising them." "I deal with things such as nausea and will see anyone, from those already doing IVF to those thinking about starting in a couple of months." "We try to enhance fertility. Sometimes it is just about information, some people are just not making love at the right time." Naturopathy can treat a lot of things. Gynae is heavily complex and fascinating, it is always a challenge. Treatment goes on throughout the pregnancy, it is like a completed project. "So how has her career change affected Hilary? "I think at this stage in life, with children leaving home, two down one to go, I can invest my time in helping other people," she says. "But I am a mother first, that is always my priority." "I have a skill that can help someone create life. I just facilitate it." As we talk I get the feeling that Hilary really embraces life and she insists: "It comes with age; you know what you want." Married in Richmond Parish Church, Hilary enjoys spending time walking with her husband and dog and taking in the view from Pembroke Lodge - "It is one of my favourite places ever," she says. Hilary's love of the borough is demonstrated best by her passion for the river that saw her buy a boat two years ago. "I love being by the river," she says. It is a cruiser, I have great fun and go with girl friends to Hampton Court Flower

show by boat and to Kingston for lunch. "It was a project when my daughter went to university. "One of the reasons I got the boat was because I had driven over the river as a child on the bus, walked by it and I have a labrador who spends half his time in it. I wanted to get on it, appreciate the history of the area. I got interested in history because of Paris. If I had more time I would learn about art and history."We are so privileged to have an area that is so full of history."By Hannah Farquharson