Not every church can claim to have existed on the same site for at least 800 years and not every church has recently undergone a major building project or 'reordering' as it is technically known. So the Rededication Service held on 21 July, celebrating both the 800th anniversary and the recent work on St Mary Magdalene, was a very special occasion, much looked forward to. The service, which also initiated a year of celebration and events, was attended by a wide range of honoured guests including the Mayor of Richmond, Councillor Nancy Baldwin.

The service started dramatically as the West Door was firmly shut by the churchwardens. Outside stood the Bishop of Southwark, the Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, the clergy and visiting clergy, servers and choir. Inside, an expectant large congregation waited. In accordance with old church rites Bishop Christopher then knocked on the closed door three times with the base of his crozier as a sign of seeking permission to enter the church and take claim of it. The churchwardens then opened the door and the procession entered the church whilst the Introit – plain chant for the Feast of St Mary Magdalene as heard in the church 800 years before – was sung. Standing by the font, Bishop Christopher led The Acclamation beginning with the very appropriate words 'How awesome is this place'. Following a magnificent trumpet fanfare by
Celebrations
by Reverend Wilma Roest

What are our celebrations, which started on 21 July 2019 and will end on 19 July 2020, all about? What do we celebrate?

There is the small matter of history, at least 800 years of a Christian presence in Richmond. It is a history we have been able to appreciate afresh after much research has been done by local volunteers in partnership with the Museum of Richmond. Then there is the building, which has grown and changed over the centuries. A building which has undergone significant work in the past 2 years (with many more years of planning before that).

In conversation with visitors I am often asked, is this building 800 years old? Of course, it isn’t. Hence we are not celebrating bricks and mortar of a specific period.

This anniversary is about the people who have engaged with faith and God in this town for at least 8 centuries. This year of celebration is about the people who have worshipped at St Mary Magdalene in the past, who have come to the church for baptisms, weddings and funerals, some of whom have their names recorded in the Anniversary Book. It is also about the people of today, about us, for whom the church still matters, the place where we are equipped to live out our faith in our time. And of course it is about the generations who will follow us, those who have just begun their journeys of faith in baptism and those who are still to come.

The church of God in Richmond, be that St Mary Magdalene, St Matthias or St John the Divine, is first and foremost the people, in all their wonderful diversity. That’s worth celebrating, don’t you think?

Team Service - continued from Page 1

brought up, presented and laid on the high altar. It records for each day of the year the names of those baptised or married or who had a funeral service in St Mary's on that date, over the many years of the church’s existence. So for 21 July the name of Thomas Collier who was baptised on 21 July 1740 was read out along with names of Charles Robinson and Harriet Cayley, married on 21 July 1821, and Fanny Elizabeth Gardner, whose funeral took place on 21 July 1843.

At the end of the service the young people presented to Bishop Christopher a copy of the 'Arts Society Children's Church Trail' - a fun way for children to explore the church. Bishop Christopher and Councillor Nancy Baldwin were also each given a special commemorative coin designed by Raphael Maklouf marking the 800th anniversary and showing a picture of the font and the Tudor Arch. Following the service which ended with Walton's 'Crown Imperial' refreshments were served and the congregation mingled and talked and caught up with old friends. There was more to come, however, for in the afternoon, from 1.30pm to 4.30pm, the Bell Ringers rang a peal of Grandsire Triples to ring in the year of celebration. A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to this wonderful day.

More on some of the special aspects of the service can be found later on in this magazine.
The Bells of St Mary’s
by Andrew Harvey & Sarah Percival

The sound of bells was an uplifting feature of the 800th anniversary celebrations at St Mary Magdalene. Local ringers rang the eight bells before the Rededication Service on July 21 to greet members of the packed congregation and to formally announce the start of a year of celebrations. Following the service an invited band of eight experienced peal ringers from London and Surrey performed 5040 changes of Grandside Triples.

St Mary’s bells are rung regularly for services, but a peal is a special event; there are only 40 recorded at St Mary’s from the 18th century to the present. Grandside Triples is a method that was first rung around 1650 and is frequently learned today. Grandside is the “tune” and Triples means that it is rung on eight bells with the heaviest, the tenor, remaining at the back at all times. The Richmond tenor weighs 18.5cwt.

The peal took 2 hours and 58 minutes of continuous ringing with no breaks and no substitutions – all eight ringers concentrate and keep going. It was conducted by James White, who instructed the ringers through the changes. They are like an orchestra in that they know the piece (Grandside) but the conductor chooses the variations and keeps them together when they change to the next part. They have no sheet music to follow; they just know what they are doing.

Many people listened to the peal outside and inside St Mary’s and at the end the ringers were thanked with a roar of applause. We are grateful to this talented band of ringers for coming to Richmond and giving the 800th anniversary such a glorious musical lift-off. Our plan is to ring another peal to mark the end of our year of celebration in July 2020.

This peal was rung against the background of the ten old peal boards in the ringing chamber, dating from 1741 to 1877. We will commission the first peal board in more than 140 years to record the ringing of the 800th Anniversary peals.

A piece about the event, including a 90-second clip of the ringing is on the St Mary Magdalene website: https://www.richmondteamministry.org/stmary/peal-of-bells-for-800th-anniversary

The Commemorative Coin
by Charles Stiller

A Commemorative Coin struck to celebrate our 800th Anniversary – Wow

What a privilege it has been, to watch Raphael Maklouf bring his idea of this coin to life. Raphael, is probably best known for his sculpture of the Queen’s Head, on the coins in your pocket.

It all started back in February, when Raphael and his wife invited me for coffee at their wonderful home, on the banks of the Thames, to discuss their amazing proposal of producing a commemorative coin/medallion for St Mary Magdalene’s 800th Anniversary.

Initial thoughts on design were the Tower on one side and something from the inside of the church for the reverse. Following the re-ordering of the church, there had been so many comments on the beautiful contours and design of the font, it soon became a leading contender and as the oldest remaining part of the church is the Tower, with its Tudor Arch which has been replicated throughout the church numerous times, it soon became clear the design for the reverse of the coin should be the font framed by the original Tudor Arch.

By April we were sat, in the sun, in Raphael’s garden tweaking sketches for the design on the coin. July the 9th, a day Wilma and I will never forget. We met Raphael at The Tower Mint where we shown all the intricate steps of making our coin. We saw the fascinating skills of the craftsmen and women turning a sketch into a relief and then a die (the inverse version of the of the image to be struck on the coin)

The press was prepared with immense care ensuring not a speck of dust would spoil the impression. A magazine of shiny discs of cupro-nickel were loaded into the press. Raphael invited Wilma forward to the press and asked her to place her finger onto a green button. “Press when you are ready”, he said and Wilma did. There was a large hiss of air pressure and a loud thud and our first coin was minted.

Davie the press operator and Raphael inspected the coin very carefully and announced “good to go”. Hiss, thud........hiss, thud....... as the production of our coins began. Raphael placed the first coin into a presentation box and handed it to Wilma. There were very big smiles all around.
Church Plate at the Rededication Service
by Elspeth Fearn

Every Sunday before the 9.30am service the servers set out on the credence table the church plate which will be used during the service - the chalices, the paten, the wafer box and the flagon. On 21 July it was all a little different in that the plate we set out that morning dated from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries and formed part of the collection of St Mary Magdalene’s plate held for many years on loan at the Museum of Richmond. By special arrangement three chalices and a paten had been loaned just for the Rededication Service. In addition a chalice and paten given in remembrance of Thomas Fenwick who died in 2002 were also used during the service.

The St Mary's plate is of great interest with the earliest chalice dating from 1630 in Charles I's reign and is very unusual to have survived because it was not melted down during the Civil War to provide fighting funds.

It is not an understatement to say that the servers were a little nervous that morning. The plate was taken out of the safe and placed on the credence table just before the service from where it shone very brightly. After the service the plate was immediately put back into the safe and then returned to the Museum. It was a little strange getting used to carrying the weight of the old plate which was quite heavy. The paten is the small circular plate on which the large host is placed before consecration and which is also used as a circular cover for the chalice. Our usual paten is about 4 inches across but the old paten which was acquired by St Mary’s in 1701 was more like a large cake stand on a stalk base.

On the Credence Table

James Upton

It was however an immense privilege as servers to carry these items to the altar and as communicants to receive wine from these old chalices. There was such a strong connection to all those who, in centuries gone by, had drunk from the same vessels. By using our original plate an extra dimension was added to this very special service.

The 800th Anniversary Book
by Charles Stiller

As we considered how to celebrate our 800th Anniversary, we were very mindful of all the people who have worshipped and prayed in our beautiful church during the last eight centuries, sharing their joys and their sorrows, their hopes and their fears.

As a part of our celebration, we thought it appropriate to remember each day, some of these people and give thanks for their lives, their contribution towards and stewardship of St Mary Magdalene, Richmond.

To this end, at each daily service throughout our Anniversary Year we will give thanks for:

- someone who was baptised in St Mary’s on that date
- a couple who were married in the church on that date, and
- someone whose funeral or memorial service was held in St Mary’s on that date.

Sarah Garrett’s magnificent patience and diligence searching through our registers over the past two years has brought this idea to life in our 800th Anniversary Book. During her research, Sarah has used

- original baptism, marriage, and service registers held at St Mary Magdalene and the Surrey History Centre in Woking
- digital scans of our registers commencing from the late 1500s held online at Ancestry.co.uk
- parish magazines held at the local archives and memorial service sheets which members of our congregation have kept over the years

The names have been reproduced in the Anniversary Book exactly as they appear in the records together with their original spellings! Sarah has found the research both enjoyable and fascinating and some of her favourite entries are from the days of the Rev Nicholas Brady in the late 1600s and early 1700s when parishioner’s occupations and where they were living was noted, so bringing the names to life.

The Anniversary Book itself was made possible by a very kind donation from Liz Lanyon, dedicating the book to the memory of her dear husband Gerald. The book’s creation has become a favoured project of the highly skilled workforce of Bookmakers and Calligraphers at FG Marshall Ltd of Epsom. Among all the books they have made in their history, our Anniversary Book is the first of its kind. Do take a moment each week to take a look at the book and ponder over the names mentioned.
PRIVATE VIEW OF EXHIBITION ‘CELEBRATING 800 YEARS OF ST MARY MAGDALENE AT THE HEART OF RICHMOND’

by Elspeth Fearn

Most private views for exhibitions are held in one place but for this exhibition there were no less than two private views. This was because the exhibition is taking place both at the Museum of Richmond and at St Mary Magdalene. Part 1 which deals with the history of the church at St Mary’s is located in the church itself and Part 2 at the Museum covers the people linked with St Mary’s during those 800 years.

So at 6pm on 24 July guests assembled at the Museum for the first half of the evening in which the Mayor of Richmond, Councillor Nancy Baldwin who had also been at the Rededication Service formally opened the exhibition. Whilst enjoying light refreshments and drinks the guests wandered around the exhibition looking at all the display banners, the prints and paintings and the display case which included the chalices that had been used at the Rededication Service a few days before. It was good to see them again!

At 6.40pm the guests gathered together and set off walking down from the Museum through Richmond on a pleasant summer’s evening to St Mary Magdalene to look at the second part of the exhibition. Also on display in a case was the 800th Anniversary Book which had been presented at the Rededication Service. The Revd Wilma Roest welcomed everyone and made a speech thanking all those who had contributed to the exhibition after which various photographs were taken – including of the Exhibition’s Steering Group, the Working Group and the Research Volunteers. Guests were also delighted to see that there was another round of light refreshments and drinks and many people stayed on for quite a while looking at the exhibition and talking to fellow guests. The evening had been another very successful event in the special 800th year programme and there is much more to come.

The exhibition has been supported by the Heritage Lottery Memorial Fund and Richmond Church Charity Estates. It runs until 25 January 2020 and has free admission.

THE PROJECT OFFICER’S VIEW

by Andrea Potts

As the Project Officer for the exhibition, my role has been to support the research volunteers and to transform their body of research into an exhibition with text, images, and objects. One of the most rewarding things about this experience has been seeing each of the volunteers go about their research as everyone has developed their skills and uncovered some exciting material.

For me, it was certainly a daunting task to tease out narratives from the research – there was so much of it! The exhibition needed to draw people in, even if they have no prior knowledge of the subject. It needed to cover the breadth of 800 years, while also engaging with the detail at times. I hope that I have managed this feat! Those of you who worked with me will know that I spent an awfully long time trying to get my word count down.

All of the volunteers should be really proud of their work, as they have brought the history of this special place to life.
Working on the 800th Anniversary Exhibition
by Elspeth Fearn

The ongoing exhibition at its two locations – the Museum of Richmond and St Mary Magdalene Church is one of the most important events in the 800th anniversary celebrations. It has provided a great opportunity for volunteers from the congregations to acquire archiving and research skills and to increase knowledge of the history of St Mary’s in all its aspects.

Led by the Project Officer Andrea Potts and with advice and support also being given to the volunteers by mentors, the research programme kicked off in August 2018 at the Museum with a Volunteers Training Day, including a visit to the Richmond Local Studies Library, where quite a lot of the research would be taking place.

The volunteers, working in pairs, tackled a variety of subjects – The Pre-1485 Church, Fixtures and Fittings, Social Hierarchies, Sermons and Liturgy and Picture Research to name a few. Findings and relevant documents from the research were placed on the shared drive Google Drive so that everyone could access them. One volunteer very helpfully placed a number of relevant books on the shared drive to save people time in tracking down physical copies. Because of the support being given by the National Lottery Heritage Memorial Fund, volunteers also kept records of the number of hours that they spent researching and filled in evaluation forms at different times.

Research findings and images were sent to Andrea by January and then used to decide what material would appear in the exhibition. Although not everything could be used, the collected full research will provide a useful and detailed record for anyone researching in the future.

The project has meant that people now know a lot more about St Mary Magdalene and see the church and the churchyard in a different and more informed light. Several volunteers have decided to continue researching some aspects privately because they have found the whole process so fascinating and want to know more. A particular strength of the project was the the spirit of co-operation between the volunteers helping each other, sharing findings and when going to archives looking into material on behalf of others as well as their own.

The Volunteers were: Donatella Astratti, Sue Eastaugh, Elspeth Fearn, Penny Francis, Sarah Garrett, Fiona Haigh, Cynthia Hill, Bella Hobson, Ruth Jones, Sarah Percival and Katie Woodward.
I researched the peal boards that are hung in the ringing chamber at St Mary Magdalene. There are ten of them dating between 1741 and 1877, and they record special ringing achievements, sometimes marking national events.

As far as I was aware no research had ever been done into these, and what I wanted to do was to find out about the people who are named on the boards. What I could see quite quickly was that all the names on the boards were men (!), and the persistence of certain surnames. Clearly there were ringing families – the Williamses (4 generations I have found out), the Platts and the Coles – and I will continue to research them.

Sarah Percival

I was pleased to be involved in the project having been a member of the congregation as well as a supporter of the Museum for many years. We are fortunate to have such a rich resource at the Local Studies and Library Archive.

Searching for images, and looking through the St Mary Magdalene folder I was excited to find the architect O.D Pearce’s drawings, dated August 1935 showing the West End as it then existed and as proposed with Gallery removed and Belfry Arch restored. This showed the position of the monuments, some of which were to be moved. Yet again they have recently found new places; actor Edmund Kean’s, for instance, is now in the South Porch near where it was originally set up (on the then exterior wall) by his son. A print of Kean’s burial scene is in the exhibition, which shows the crowd of onlookers, including some on the roof.

Bella Hobson

Bella and I were doing picture research, so had to seek out images quite widely using, among other sources, computer desk research at the British Library and the Collage Picture Archive; local, London and wider afield Galleries’ websites; visits to Richmond Local Studies Library and the Museum, the photo library at the Surrey History Centre, as well as photos and expertise contributed by present day members of the congregation - all to illustrate the seven different topics which were being looked into.

It was very rewarding to track down appropriate images, replicate reports from contemporary newspapers, which broadened our understanding of the historic place of the people recorded on the many memorials on the walls in the church and thus to establish the place of our church in the community.

Penny Francis

I thoroughly enjoyed my research and was very attracted to the work of Nicholas Brady, a late 17th Century vicar of Richmond, who co-operated with the then Poet Laureate to produce an updated metrical version of the Psalms, ‘fitted to the tunes used in churches’ as he called them.

An early example of encouraging participation by the congregation!

Cynthia Hill

The most exciting part for me was being able to see and handle the Feet of Fines document from 1258 at the National Archives which records that ‘15 pence a year is to be paid to the church of Shene’. It was a most beautiful manuscript, even though I could not read it! The most enjoyable part was researching the occupants of Church Walk.

Ruth Jones
Peter Bowyer, Parish Architect,
in conversation with the Revd Alan Sykes

Why did you become an architect?

My parents were architects, so it was in the genes. I visited building sites with my father when still at primary school, and had climbed my first – and only – tower crane by the age of eleven. There was no escape really.....

How did you become the RTM Parish Architect?

My first job after three years in college in Brighton was at the Richmond firm of Manning Clamp and Partners, and I returned there after I qualified. So, I have been around Richmond for forty-five years, give or take. My first projects as a barely employable student, and working under Tom Manning, were designing housing for the elderly. Tom was Parish Architect for a time, and he and Paul Velluet put my name forward for the role. I had to leave the practice to undertake the work, but as it coincided with meeting my future wife in Greece, that was inevitable anyway. Next year marks 35 years in the job.

What would you say are their best and worst points of our church buildings?

A dangerous question! I enjoy being in all three churches, absorbing the sense of place and individuality that they offer. All three are “best” in their own ways. .... When in the right mood, I enjoy the formality and loftiness of St Matthias, the relative simplicity of the Nave of St John’s, the surprising intimacy of scale of St Mary Magdalene. From an Inspecting Architect’s point of view, “worst” means difficult to access and maintain. So, while St Matthias is lofty, it is definitely “worst” for ease of maintenance!

Is the project at St Mary Magdalene the largest project you’ve been involved with either in RTM or elsewhere?

In monetary terms, probably not the largest: my early housing projects were probably larger at today’s values. A particular one in Winchester was technically challenging: we were building up against the Roman city wall, digging foundations through two millenia of debris, and getting well below the level of the adjoining River Itchen. But it is true to say that the St Mary Magdalene project is up there (along with the external work on St Matthias tower and West Front) in terms of timescale and range of different mind-sets required: managing the approvals’ processes, the finances, the workforce on site, and manufacturers and suppliers on a daily basis, and of course all the technical aspects, many of them unique in my experience, over what will have been nine years by the time we finish. It seems longer sometimes.....

What were the most important archaeological findings from the project?

We were not carrying out an archaeological dig as such. We didn’t find as many burial vaults as we were expecting – which was helpful. I suspect most had been removed during the 1864 re-flooring. We did find the rough masonry (stone and flint) substructure of a pre-1487 church, though, under the North and South colonnades. The excavations also revealed the pre-tower West masonry wall and door, with the brick Tower clearly overlaying it. Unfortunately, we did not find anything enabling us to date that masonry! Disappointingly, we failed to resolve the enigma of the skewed West wall of the South Aisle: in fact, the mystery deepened, as below floor level the substructure was correctly aligned, at right-angles to the colonnade, and the wall very thick.

You worked with various teams of craftspeople over a long period. Can you describe what that was like?

It started with the repair and reglazing of the Aisle windows. Once I found the right people, the team gelled, and blacksmith, iron-founder, decorator, glazier, the glass suppliers and scaffold all worked together to achieve the fine windows we now have. For the main work, the floor-layers were used to such projects (though not with the
construction technique we adopted), and the stone-masons and the conservators were specialists in their fields, but the others – the ground-workers, carpenters, joiners, decorators - had not undertaken such work or on such a scale before: a lot of encouragement and experimentation was required. Overall, I would say it has been an enjoyable process for all. Would I do it again? No!

**When you walk into St Mary Magdalene now, what are your feelings?**

Relief! That we took on a large and complex project, with relatively modest resources, and that most people are happy with the result.

**What does the future hold for you?**

Well, the work in Richmond is not finished yet, but I am looking forward to basing myself back in Hereford next year: there is so much cultural life that I cannot fully involve myself in at the moment - the Three Choirs’ Festival, as I write, for example. Family will continue to draw me down to Cornwall, as friends have all my adult life. And there are my olive gardens in Greece: when my wife was alive, I could not understand how anyone could waste so much time cultivating a crop that cost more to harvest than it was worth. Now that the baton has been passed to me, I understand......

Having said that, I hope I will continue to be around Richmond for years, if not decades, to come. I have many friends in this part of the world, for which I am very grateful.

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**The Stone used in the Refurbishment Project at St Mary Magdalene**

by Peter Bowyer

The new floor in the Nave and Aisles is finished with Purbeck limestone quarried and prepared on the Isle of Purbeck, Dorset, - just west of Swanage - by the family firm Haysom’s. They have been working the local limestone since 1934, and have supplied stone for new floors throughout the UK, continuing a quarrying tradition going back to Roman times.

The stone itself quarried from a series of limestone beds from the Upper Jurassic to the Lower Cretaceous eras, sedimentary rocks formed from deposits laid down in a shallow freshwater to brackish lagoon. Each level exhibits different characteristics, which led to them being quarried for specific purposes: the well-known dark “Purbeck Marble”, now exhausted, was much used for decorative work in medieval times; and much stone is used for rubble- and ashlar walling. Flooring stone takes a reasonable polish (the surface is honed using increasingly-fine grades of grit), a process which highlights the varying degrees of shelliness, and is fairly resistant to most spillages.

We visited a number of new floors before deciding on the beds we wanted: Boxgrove Priory (Sussex) – twice; Buckfast Abbey (Devon); Rochester Cathedral (Kent) - as well as a couple of churches in London. The “Richmond” mix comprises: 75% “Downsvein” - a premium stone not always available in the quantities we needed, 15% “Inland Freestone”, and 10% “Weston”, “Roach” and “Thornback”, laid in random lengths within a regime of three course widths. By way of a slight contrast, the colonnades, the perimeters and the ramp and steps are of Purbeck “Grub”, a grey and relatively uniform shelly stone.

The flooring was laid by the appropriately-named Ammonite Projects Ltd (ammonites being one of the fossilised creatures frequently found in the Purbeck and neighbouring Portland quarries)
The 800th Anniversary celebrations at St Mary Magdalene are taking place over 2019-2020 but it should not be overlooked that 2020 will also see the 25th anniversary of the legal establishment of the Richmond Team Ministry. Whilst a much more modest anniversary it is nevertheless of great importance to our three churches today.

My words 'legal establishment' are used deliberately because, in reality, the team ministry had already effectively been running in practical terms for some considerable time. St Mary Magdalene, St Matthias and St John the Divine had been united in a single parish ever since the merger of those separate parishes back in 1979. Team Ministries were starting to develop in the Church of England and the concept was considered suitable for Richmond's situation, as in 1985 a proposal was made to form our three churches into a Team Ministry. Five years later, in 1990, Diocesan approval to the change was given and in 1995 the Team formally and legally became a Team Ministry with the approval by Her Majesty in Council of a Scheme under the Church Representation Rules which govern the structure of parishes amongst other things.

There are various reasons for Team Ministries and so much will depend on the circumstances of the individual parishes – but often it is felt that collaborative team work can accomplish more, make the best use of limited resources, reduce the pressure on individual clergy, and prevent the physical closure of under attended churches. Richmond Team Ministry was in the vanguard and many other Team Ministries have been set up over the intervening years. More recently, however, there has been a bit of a move away from them but at the same time alternative concepts of Team Ministries are being developed. There is a common desire to find ways of worship and of organisation that promote inclusivity and provide access to the Church to a much wider range of people from all backgrounds in the community, many of whom have little knowledge of the basics of Christianity or are intimidated or worried by entering a church. So today is a mixed picture with some churches moving to a straightforward union of benefices, whilst others still actively seek Team Ministry status and yet others try new formats of Team Ministry.

As an example of the latter I saw an advert recently for a post of Team Leader/Rector Designate in a large northern industrial town. Seven new parishes were to be created into one new team benefice from no less than 29 existing parishes. Each of these new parishes which were to be known as 'hubs' would be staffed by two Team Vicars plus their teams of other ordained and lay leaders.

The plans were described as a 'new way of doing and being church' and it was hoped that this new form of Team Ministry would produce growth and revitalise worship. I understand and sympathise very much with all these aims and I suspect that some of the 29 existing parishes currently have a marginal existence. Banding together in this new form of Team Ministry, which has been arrived at after considerable thought, consultation and prayer is probably the best solution for the Anglican churches in the town. But it does seem a little large and corporate and I wonder how pastoral relationships in and between the hubs, the people in them and in the town will develop.

Richmond Team Ministry, by contrast seems to me to be just the right size with both a Team identity and yet able to keep as distinct and to respect the different characteristics of the three individual churches and their services. We all have so many ties and friends across the three congregations and that is a great blessing. After 25 plus years our Team Ministry continues to flourish.
The churchyard of St Mary Magdalene is also an important part of its history. During the 18th, 19th centuries and well into the 20th century, Church Walk was a very different place to today in that it was full of shops and businesses. These would commonly be service industry businesses, conducted in the front rooms of the houses and taking advantage of the large congregations of St Mary's literally on their doorstep.

The businesses were very varied. Here are some examples -

1865 Richard Eden brazier
1876 George Wheeler upholsterer
1890 Mrs Maskell dressmaker
1903 James Smith tailor
1911 John Banstone Treby jeweller
1920 Herbert Mountain confectioner
1925 Harlequin Team Rooms Miss Parker
1930 Stanley Cowper Elliot antique dealer
1948 Charles H Hodges wine merchant
1971 Ralph Steptoe photographer

There were also milliners, saddlers, upholsterers, plasterers, carpenters, boot and shoe manufacturers, furniture dealers, piano teachers and bath chair proprietors.

At 5 Church Walk were the Church Rooms, (the predecessors of today's Parish Rooms) which were privately owned until St Mary's purchased them in 1905. In 1786, Mr Clement Smith the then owner, who was both the Vestry Clerk and clerk to the Parish Trustees rented some of the property out to the Vestry. The Richmond Bridge Commissioners also occupied a room from 1776 to 1859, supervising the building of the bridge and managing the tolls payable for crossing the bridge until it was made toll free. Over the years there were also lettings to a number of schools including Dr George Charles Julian's infant school 1838 and the Alfred Grove School Room in 1860, This is not surprising as, particularly in the nineteenth century, Richmond was crammed with schools, including many on the Green. Other tenants included the Strict Baptist Church and in the 1920s some of the then Borough of Richmond offices.

Church Walk today is relatively quiet but it would have been a very busy and quite noisy place in the past.
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Our Churches

St John the Divine  St Mary Magdalene  St Matthias