



www.st-mary-magdalene-boveney.org.uk

Annual Report 2017

Dear Friends and Supporters,

It has been an interesting year at our beautiful Church – challenges and opportunities coming regularly throughout the year!

1. Opening and Closing the Church

- a. Since July 2016 we have been opening the Church every day. Our thanks to Peter Smith, who opens it every morning, and to Peter Bowman who stands in for Peter Smith and I when we are not available.
- b. It is our plan to keep it open on all days in 2018 and future years if at all possible.
- c. We have had one offer this year from somebody who lives on Dorney Common to assist us with the opening and closing if we need it and would be happy to hear of any other local residents who might be available if required.

2. Number of Visitors

- a. From the number of comments in the Visitor's Book, the donations and our observations we estimate that around 11,000 people visited the Church in 2017.
- b. This is a very encouraging number and we will attempt to list the Church in the Windsor Tourism list of "Things to do around Windsor" in 2018.

3. Visitors Book comments

- a. We continue to have many wonderful, supportive comments in our Visitors Book. We have put all of them [on our website](#) to share with you.

4. Security

- a. Fortunately, to date, we have not had a recurrence of the vandalism we experienced a couple of years ago.

5. Jetty planning

- a. In order to improve our security we investigated the construction of a jetty on the Thames immediately in front of the Church using an old wharf, part of which still exists there. We would then have sought a residential boat owner to moor at the jetty and keep an eye on the Church 24/7. We were confident of getting planning permission as long as there were no issues raised by the Environment Agency with regard to flooding. Unfortunately we just fall inside Flood Zone 3b which precludes all such residential moorings.
- b. We will continue to examine other security options.

6. River bank undergrowth

- a. In January 2017 we asked the Grounds Supervisor at Dorney Lake, Park and Arboretum, which is owned by Eton College, whether they could clear the substantial undergrowth that had sprouted along the river bank over the years and completely blocked the view from the Church to the River and vice-versa. As part of their ongoing grounds maintenance in the

area they kindly did that and we now have an excellent view of the River. Thank you very much, Dorney Lake.



7. Maintenance of the Church

- a. Various minor works have been done during the year. The main problem we have is the rabbits burrowing under the Church and causing some problems under the tiles in the Nave. There isn't a permanent solution to this so, if any of you see some loose or dropped tiles, please let me know!
- b. We have had many compliments about our piano – which is suffering a bit from damp and a few sticking keys. However, it is played regularly and there is music available for all levels of proficiency! Please come down and enjoy it. If you have some suitable spare music please leave it on the pew next to the piano! The Church has great acoustics!

8. Cleaning

- a. We do have cleaners in twice a year for a Spring-clean and a pre-Winter clean. During the year we do ensure that the surfaces are brushed down and the Church is kept as clean as possible given its location.

9. Filming

- a. As some of you may know, the Church featured – albeit briefly and even then you'd probably miss it – in the wedding scenes in Kevin Costner's 1991 film [Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves](#).
- b. In 2017 we were approached by the producers of Flowers which is a British comedy TV series written by Will Sharpe and starring Olivia Colman and Julian Barratt. It was commissioned by Channel 4. Series Two is due to air during 2018.
- c. They filmed a number of scenes at the Church at the beginning of October with a large residential barge representing the vicar's residence at a temporary jetty in front of the Church.





- d. The whole process went very well and, given the income earned by the Friends of Friendless Churches from the filming, we will be seeking suitable additional filming opportunities in future.

10. Services 2017 and 2018

- a. We had our three services in 2017 at Easter, on July 22nd and two Sundays before Christmas.
- b. All went very well – but the weather wasn't as kind to us in 2017 as it had been in 2016!
- c. Our 2018 Services, as currently planned, are:
 - i. Easter Sunday Sunrise Service - 0615hrs on Sunday, 1st April 2018
 - ii. St Mary Magdalene Patronal Festival Service - 1600hrs on Sunday, 22nd July 2018
 - iii. Christmas Advent Service by Candlelight - 1500hrs on Sunday, 9th December 2018

11. Wedding Blessings etc.

- a. We had one Wedding Blessing on 15th July 2017 for Lewis and Gerry.
- b. We do receive a number of requests for weddings at the Church but, as weddings are only permissible in very special circumstances and need to be approved by the Archbishop of Canterbury, we – regrettably - have to advise couples that such events are not generally allowed by the Church of England.

12. Frank Church, Percy Evins & William Poole

- a. The two plaques in the Church commemorate the three people associated with the Church who lost their lives in the two World Wars.
- b. A considerable amount of research has been conducted into the life of Frank Church and this is available both in the Church and on our website.
- c. It is our intention to research the lives of Percy Evins & William Poole, formerly Choristers in the Church who gave their lives in the World War 1939 – 1945, and provide such information that might be available during the year.

13. The Montague Family Connection

- a. The Montague family lived at Boveney Court (close to the Church) from at least the 15th century to the early 18th century and were substantial landowners and tenants in both Boveney and Dorney. One of them, the Reverend Lawrence Montague was the Vicar of Dorney from 6th March 1572. His son, Richard Montague, born in Dorney Vicarage round about the year 1578, educated at King's College, Cambridge, became Dean of Hereford in 1616 and then Canon of St George's Windsor. His next step was Bishop of Chichester, whence he translated to Norwich in 1638. He died in 1641 and was buried in Norwich Cathedral.
- b. Peter Montague was born at Boveney in 1603. Peter Montague was the first Montague immigrant to settle in the New World, arriving in Jamestown Colony, Nov 1621, on the ship

Sir Charles. Through his six children, he is responsible for at least ten thousand descendants as of this date.

- c. We are in touch with members of the Montague family around the world and regularly welcome descendants researching the family genealogy to the Church.
- d. We are considering ways in which we might further develop this relationship going forward and are open to suggestions.

14. Donations

- a. Given the significant number of visitors we now have to the Church since opening it up in July 2016, we are also pleased to report that donations received at the Church have increased appreciably.
- b. We are discussing with the Friends of Friendless Churches how such donations could be placed into a restricted Fabric Fund for future refurbishment of the building.

15. [Our Website](#)

- a. In 2017 we had nearly 4,000 visitors to the site, which was an increase of over 130% since 2015. This, we believe, is due primarily to the opening of the Church in July 2016.

16. New Director of the Friends of Friendless Churches

- a. Since our inception we have received enormous support from Matthew Saunders, the Director of the Friends of Friendless Churches. He has provided us with excellent guidance and has always been very positive when approached by us on a huge variety of issues and suggestions.
- b. His book, "Saving Churches: The Friends of Friendless Churches: The First 50 Years", is in the Church and the piece on the Church has been read by thousands of visitors.
- c. Matthew is retiring in January 2018 and his successor is Rachel Morley who joins the FoFC from the Churches Conservation Trust, where she is currently National PR Officer, and was previously Estate Officer overseeing the maintenance of CCT churches in southeast England.
- d. We would like to thank Matthew for all of his kind assistance and cogent advice over the years and look forward to welcoming Rachel to the Church as soon as possible.

We thank all of our Friends, Supporters and Volunteers for their support and contributions during 2018 and wish you all a very Happy, Successful and Peaceful 2018.

Bill Dax
Chairman
Friends of St Mary Magdalene

bill@daxfamily.com

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