



Coldean

Community & Church Magazine

Autumn 2019

£1.00



Parish Contacts

St Mary Magdalen Church

Rev Betsy Gray-Hammond 01273 601 854

Lay Reader

Marian Framroze 01273 686 981

Churchwarden

John Phillips 01273 683 835

Treasurer

John Phillips 01273 683 835

Hall Secretary

Sue Docherty 07526 455 302

Magazine Editor

John Phillips 01273 683 835

jrp44bevendean@gmail.com

St Mary Magdalen Events October - December

- 06 Oct 2019 Harvest Lunch for Charity at St. MM 12.30 p.m.
19 Oct 2019 Quiz Evening at St. MM. 7.30 p.m.
03 Nov 2019 All Saints Day at 9.30 a.m.
03 Nov 2019 All Souls Day at 4.00 p.m.
10 Nov 2019 Remembrance Sunday at St M.M. at 10 a.m.
17 Nov 2019 Charity Lunch for Help for Heroes St MM. at 12.30 p.m.
29 Nov 2019 Christmas Market St MM 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.
01 Dec 2019 Advent Sunday St MM 9.30 a.m.
08 Dec 2019 Christingle Service at St MM 10 a.m.
08 Dec 2019 Charity Lunch for the Childrens Society St MM at 12.30 p.m.

A Message from Rev Betsy

Dear Friends and Neighbours,

I find it hard to believe that it is time for the Autumn edition of our magazine to be printed, our short but quite lovely Summer has disappeared the sun has already lost its heat and the wildlife is preparing for the winter. I have to say that I do love autumn, the colours, and the change in light adding a glow to the hedgerows and trees, bright sharp days and cosy evenings.

As a child, autumn meant that the glass fronted cabinets in the spare room would be filled to overflowing with homemade jams, jellies, green tomato chutney, piccalilli, and all sorts of bottled fruit, all reminders of warmer days, flavours of days well spent in the sunshine gathering all that was needed to fill these jars.

Most of the preserve making took place on a Sunday afternoon, after the required quiet time, following lunch. We would have a cup of tea, turn the kitchen radio on and prepare whatever we had that day to be transformed and enjoyed at a later date.

It was a great time, especially as it meant the whole family from Great Grandmother to youngest child was involved, stories of days long past abounded and we rested in each other's company knowing that we were loved. It was an important time of the year and was often followed by visits to extended family and friends with gifts of, you have guessed it! homemade preserves. Important times, building vivid picture memories that will last forever.

It is important to find time to simply be; to read, to pray and reflect, to listen to music, walk the dog, enjoying the sights, sounds, smells of every season and to count those things as blessings. Although the year is moving on, plants and creatures prepare to sleep until spring we will still keep busy, sometimes too busy to notice the small things, a cup of tea with a neighbour, a pint at the local with friends, a day filled with visiting and an evening of rest.

Through all these days, the church will stand and wait for you, to drop in, sit down, pause a while and enjoy the peace that is to be found within her ancient walls. Sit and be still and you will hear the echoes of time long past, of children playing on the roof of this beautiful building, of cattle lowing, of the life of the farm she was once part of, busy and active all the time, only still as darkness fell.

Today she still serves us; a place to seek solace, to celebrate, to mourn. But how often do we remember her real reason for still being here, why she was rescued from simply crumbling into nothing, flints and tiles, beams and tresses slowly devoured by the land upon which she stood. She was saved, saved by God who called her to be a haven for his flock regardless of day or season; a place where in this murky contemporary world a light still shines, and peace may be felt. I meet so many people in the course of my week, preparing for Baptism, Weddings, Funerals, all in the different seasons of their earthly journey and the first thing that most of them say is; "I used to go to church every week, I sang in the choir, I went to Sunday School, I served at the Altar" and my reply is always what happened to stop you from going?

And mostly they do not know, things just got in the way, work, children, sport, shopping, modern life. But she still stands in faith waiting for the day that you return, still waiting to welcome you to the security of her walls, and the vicar? Well she may be a right pain in the neck, but she waits too, to serve community, to share the love of God and to ensure that these ancient walls still stand strong, for your children's, children. Find time perhaps this autumn to come back and visit, spend some time with her and let the peace of God surround you.

May God be with you all, may you be blessed in all things.

Yours in Christ,

Revd Betsy

Memories of World War II

The 3rd September this year was the 80th anniversary of the start of World War Two and June the 6th this year was the 75th anniversary of D-Day when Allied troops entered France from the Channel coast.

It therefore seems appropriate to include people's memories of the Second World War in this edition of the magazine. If you have any memories you would like to share please send them to the editor at St Mary Magdalen Church for inclusion in a future edition of the magazine.

Bess Tuppin remembers the start of World War II

On the Third of September 1939 the morning service at St. Andrew's Church in Sandon Essex, near Chelmsford our village was cut short.

We all crowded across the green to the houses that had their radios on (no television then) to hear the Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain announce at 12

o'clock that we were at war with Germany. The sirens went off then, although they were only testing them.

We knew it was coming as there had been lots of preparation, such as blackout for windows etc. How to make air raid shelters in the gardens or houses.

We had been given gas masks, and identity cards to carry around with us. Cycle lights had to be shaded so they only showed the ground just in front of your wheels and signposts were taken down.

This was really useless as the Germans knew the layout anyway because German students had worked in the factory of Hoffman Marconi's in Chelmsford.



St Andrews Church, Sandon

Dot & Ron Mepham Memories of World War 2

Dot lived in Round Hill Crescent, near the old railway line to Kemptown. She remembers that they had a Morrison shelter in a ground floor room. The shelter was made of steel and was 7' x 6' x 2'6" tall.



A Morrison Shelter in a Living Room

The following items were kept in the Morrison shelter, a mattress, pillows, blankets, a bottle of water, a hammer and a poker in case they needed to bang on the ceiling to attract attention. There was always milk which was replaced every day with fresh, a tin of biscuits with the biscuits being eaten every so often and replaced with fresh biscuits. They also kept a potty in the shelter.

Dot remembers that with friends she tap danced on the top of the shelter as it made a nice noise. She slept in the air raid shelter as she was afraid to sleep at the top of the house. One of her uncles saved up his sweet coupons and sent Dot to the sweetshop once a month. There was always a Mars bar on the list, which was given to Dot for being a good girl and going and buying the sweets.

When she went to the grocers with her mother they were always given a little extra as they were family. People clubbed together and

saved coupons so that if anyone was getting married they could get enough material to make a wedding dress and buy extra food.

At the age of eight years Dot was sent to North Wales to a place called Greenfield and then to Holywell which was a farm where she stayed for about 18 months. Every morning she had to walk over the mountain to deliver cans of milk and the houses she went to were in opposite directions so she had a lot of walking to do before going to school.

The school was in a different direction over the mountain and was held in the village hall, there were four classes and two teachers, Dot was in the middle between the two teachers and she never knew which teacher to listen too.

Once when Dot's Aunt went to visit her in Wales she took her a blue velvet dress, later it was washed and put on the line to dry. When everyone got home at the end of the day they found just two sleeves of the dress left hanging on the line, a calf had eaten the rest.

There was a turkey called Roberta in the back garden at Roundhill Crescent and it became her friend, she feed it with pieces of apple. It disappeared one day and she found that she was eating it on Christmas Day which made her very unhappy, because it was her friend.

Ron lived in Newick Road during the war. The family tried to dig a hole in the garden for an Anderson shelter but they could not dig deep enough to reach the chalk subsoil so they were unable to have this type of shelter in the garden. Instead they had a Morrison shelter in the front room of the house.

Ron remembers that a V1 rocket landed opposite the Swan Inn at Falmer but did not explode. Ron with some other boys went on their bikes to have a look.

On another occasion Ron scrambled over the wall into Stanmer Park but was arrested with some other boys for scrumping apples. The Canadian soldiers in the Park took pity on the boys and picked some of the apples and put them into bags for the boys to carry home.

They both remember that you were able to leave your doors open and people were prepared to help each other out, not like it is today.

Despite the hardships and rationing during the war and after, they both said they had a good childhood, neither of them can remember anything really horrible happening in the war although they know now that terrible things did happen.

Oh to be Evacuated

I can remember being in the shelter at Elm Grove Infants School, the “all clear” going, and then returning to our desks, then hearing a plane, and the teacher saying, not one of ours under the desks. We hid under the desks then and there were two loud bangs.

I came home and mum said it was time to be “evacuated”. I went down with measles, but my two older sisters were evacuated in a very short time, with me following two weeks later.



Evacuees at Brighton Station with bags and labels to say who they are

I cannot remember leaving Brighton but remember being on the train with eight others all about my age, locked in a compartment, the train guard

checking on us to see if we wanted the toilet etc., all with gas mask, label and the case for the few things we could take with us.

At Victoria station the guard handed us over to 3 ladies dressed in dark green, who signed for us and put us on board a type of people carrier, having never been in a car before this was quite an experience. We drove across London to King's Cross station I think, to be put on the train to Manchester.

Having checked that we had something to eat and drink the train guard signed for us again and we were locked in a compartment for the trip, the train guard checking that we were all right every half hour or so. It was a long journey and we arrived in Manchester in the early evening. It was dark and having been signed for by ladies in dark green, four of us were put in the back of a car with two ladies in front, driving up 5 to 10 miles an hour, with hooded headlights so you could only see two or three yards in front.

We drove through built-up areas and out into complete darkness in country lanes. After a while the passenger lady, kept going up to places knocking on the door then getting back in the car to drive to the next building, they knew which houses had evacuees but did not have a list of the children there so she was writing the names down, for their records till they found our places.

I ended up with my eldest sister with Mr. and Mrs. Kear in Oldham Road at Lydgate (12 miles north of Manchester). They were very strict but very fair. The one thing that sticks in my mind, when they brought anything on ration you had your share in your box in the Larder and you ate that in that week, other items were in the larder which you all shared.

Mr. Kear had two model boats made to scale, Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth 1200 to 1500 mm long which most weekends we went across the road into the field to 2 ponds. We then filled the engines with water and a burner and when steam appeared it sent the boats across the water. One time doing this, I fell in and ended up covered with boils, having five or six kaolin poultices put on twice a day, very painful I remember.

After a short time my sister and I were moved very quickly to Mrs. Dunkerton at the Bungalow on the Hill, Burnege Lane, Lydgate. We were

only there for weeks and then moved to Mr. and Mrs. Steele at Springfield Farm, Burnege Lane where we stayed for the rest of our time.

I was just six and a bit when I left Brighton and arrived back just to spend six weeks in Elm Grove Junior School and in that time took my 11 plus exam.

I went back to the Steels for my summer holidays until I was 15 and saw them many times after.

We were told later that we will move from Mr. and Mrs. Kear's as they asked to adopt me but not my sister, my father objected.

I also learnt later that Mr. Kear was at Manchester docks and responsible for repairs of any damage to ships and ensuring that they had a seaworthy certificate before they sailed again.

Raymond Bond

Coldean Community Chorus

Wednesdays 7 - 8.30 p.m.

Come and sing!

All styles of music -

Everyone welcome - It's free

Sing for fun and make new friends



St Mary Magdalen Church

Call/Text Tracey on 0752 2790845 for more information

Tracy Taylor is a local resident who has a background in musical theatre and is also a qualified mental health professional. She is currently combining these two fields by inviting those who enjoy singing for pleasure to come and join the Coldean Community Chorus at St Mary Magdalen each Wednesday evening at 7pm.

A great way to socialise, have fun and enjoy all the proven health benefits of singing; the choir has been together for several months but welcomes new members and sessions are free.

Call Tracy on 07522790845 or just come along.

Les Wilson spent his wartime as a Bevin Boy

Les was born in November 1925 and lived at 9 Manton Road when he was a child. He was 14 years old when war broke out. When he was old enough to serve in the armed forces he was selected to work in the coal mines due to a shortage of miners, as many had gone into the armed forces.

Leslie Wilson photographed at Manchester following his call up to work in the coal mines. Photograph taken in 1944.



I got my call up papers on Christmas Eve, although we used to have a post on Christmas Day, and they said I had got to go to Coventry to train and it was a right waste of time.

Rev. Bransby Jones, who was the Vicar of St Andrews Church at Moulsecombe said to me before I left; see if you can get to Llay mine colliery so I can get you digs.

I came home on the Saturday and I went down to see him on Sunday. He pulled out an old Church Magazine, tore the back page off and he wrote a letter and said give it to Haynes the Post in Llay, he was a churchwarden, and he got me my digs. That's how I got to go, I asked to go to Llay and they let me, but then they realised it wasn't a good idea to let people go where they wanted to, so they stopped it and just put you in a colliery where you were needed.

I was lucky, it was a mechanical colliery with no horses and so therefore there were no rats, no mice and no forage. There was only one wet spot and that didn't matter, they had stalactites hanging down over a travelling road so it didn't matter. It was quite a good thing, I was on the lash. There was a great road coming out, it went up and down, a mile long it was. We used to lash full wagons on with the chain at the bottom and at the top do the same with empty ones.

I was lashing on wagons that held half a ton of coal which were going up an incline all the time.

I always thought we were only $\frac{3}{4}$ mile down, we used to get hot down there, it got really hot in the summer we were stripped to the waist and I could drink 6 pints of water on a shift, and I could also knock back some pints at the end of the shift when I was out. The cage we went down in went down vertically in one drop.

Les looked at a photograph of a party to celebrate Victory Europe Day at the end of Lower Bevendean Avenue. That's Bransby Jones in the picture I don't remember the party as I was away at the time. I was home for the end of the war the victory in Japan. Bransby Jones was the Vicar of St Andrews Church, he left in 1949.

I came back in 1947 and he was still here. He was the one that got me in the colliery in Wales, as he used to be the vicar of that village. They say he came Brighton in 1935 and went to Portslade first. In September 1934 they had the terrible mining disaster in Dennis (the main shaft) in Gresford Colliery North Wales and Bransby Jones was the vicar of Llay the next door village where I was sent. He was there then and he went to see some of the people of Llay whose relatives were killed in the disaster that was in September 1934.

The miners are still down there, all the men that they never got out and when I was up there and we were digging the coal we were digging towards the same Dennis shaft.

I left before they got that far, they sunk the pit to a mile deep, I didn't know that when I was working on the fourteens (coal face area) at the time that we were a mile underground.

Sometime after I left Llay, Marion and I went up to see my mate who worked in the ambulance room and he was on duty on a Sunday. We saw him and he said do you want to go down?

But I said how do you get down and he said there are ways and means, but don't say anything to anybody. They took Marion and me down. It was a double change then, because as we were going down to the bottom of number 1 pit which was still illuminated, they hadn't closed it off, and I couldn't believe it was a mile deep.

I've got a little bit of coal that Marion pulled off the coalface there, which is on the shelf in the sitting room. The colliery is gone now. It took 6,000 tons of slurry to fill up the 2 mineshafts. It's all filled in they've got a ring of stones round there with a bit of a garden, that's all that is left. There is still a lot of good quality coal left under the ground.

Who were the Bevin Boys?

In 1943, as the Second World War raged on and coal supplies dwindled, Britain urgently needed more fuel but many miners had been drafted into the armed forces. In response, a huge group of men were conscripted to the coal mines to meet the demand.

Ernest Bevin decided to introduce a new conscription scheme to create a new workforce, which was dubbed the 'Bevin Boys' by the press. Ernest Bevin was a former minister for labour.

The Bevin Boys were chosen out of a hat, class or background was no barrier to being selected to work at the coal face although exemptions were applied to men in highly skilled occupations and those vital for submarine or aircraft crew service.

Every month, for 20 months, Bevin's secretary drew numbers from his distinctive Homburg hat. If the number drawn matched the last digit of a man's National Service number, he was sent to the mines.

By the end of the scheme in 1948, 48,000 men from all walks of life had been thrust into the world of coal mining.

The Bevin Boys relied on some resourceful miners' tricks; they were only issued with a compressed cardboard helmet and a pair of steel-toed boots, and were required to provide their own work clothes by using up their ration coupons.

Miners had flasks of cold tea to quench their thirst in the stifling heat of the mine. When that ran out, they resorted to the miners' trick of sucking a piece of clean coal to keep their mouth lubricated.

Many of the Bevin Boys were not released from their work until several years after the war ended, continuing after other services had been demobbed. Coal was still required to help rebuild the country.

Hello!

I'm Heather and you might have met me already. I'm an Ordinand on placement at St Mary Magdalen's and I'm here for September and October. I'm in the middle of my ordination training at St Augustine's College of Theology; I started there in September 2018 and am due to finish next June - when, God willing, I will be ordained as a Deacon and commence my curacy.

I live in central Brighton with my husband and two daughters (who are both about to depart for university in the next few weeks!). Before commencing my ordination training, I trained and worked for a short while as a primary school teacher, and before that I worked in the Civil Service in both London and Brighton. I have been overwhelmed by God's love and powerful presence, moving me forward to explore and then act upon what I discovered to be a vocation to ordained ministry. It has been truly wonderful.



ST. MARGARET'S, CANNON PLACE

St Margaret's formally in Cannon Place Brighton, was a church which was demolished in 1959 to make way for Sussex Heights.

This Chapel was designed by Charles Busby with the first stone being laid on May 24th, 1824. The building was carried on with such rapidity that the Church was opened for worship on December 26th, 1824. The building was commissioned by Barnard Gregory, the editor of the 'Brighton Gazette' and the dedication to St Margaret was after the editor's wife, Margaret. Alterations were made by Amon Wilds in 1830 and the building was further enlarged in 1874. The Church was hidden away behind the Hotel Metropole and the houses of Regency Square and Cannon Place and was a striking building with an Ionic front, with four massive columns. It stretched across the west end of St. Margaret's Place, blocking what would otherwise have been a thoroughfare.

This large Church enjoyed a reputation in Brighton, and beyond the town and county, for the distinctively Evangelical character of its services, the extreme liberality of its large congregation to all kinds of good works, its varied and useful services to the town, and its zeal for the cause of Foreign Missions.

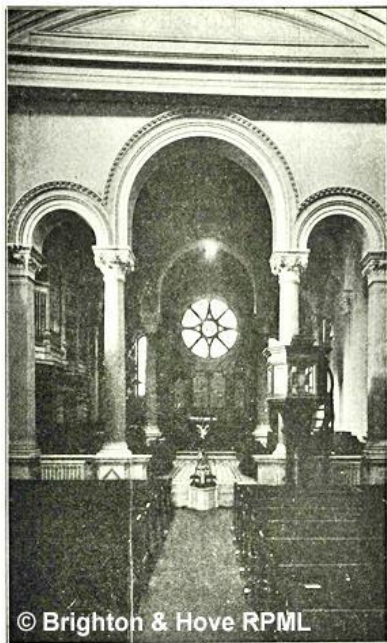
St.. Margaret's was erected under a special Act of Parliament, and the fabric of the Church, which was for over forty years the property of Miss E. E.



St Margaret's Church, Cannon Place

Hornbuckle, passed at her death in 1914 into the hands of a body of Evangelical trustees. The patronage was in the hands of the Vicar of Brighton, and the Church had a conventional district assigned to it. There were 1,460 seats in the Chapel for the congregation.

In 1874 the whole structure was greatly enhanced by the addition of a very imposing and lofty chancel by Mr. J. O. Scott (son of Sir Gilbert Scott). The interior was rich and spacious with a chancel 41ft. long, 30ft. wide and 45ft. high. It was supported by a large chancel arch, with a smaller arch on either side. A similar arcade of three arches was built about mid-way



Interior towards the Sanctuary

between the first arches and the sanctuary. The six arches rested upon massive pillars of Penryn stone. Other arches, which separated the south aisle from the chancel rested on pillars of Bath stone.

During the incumbency of the Rev. Edmund Clay (1855-1872) the upper gallery running from north to south was built for the use of the Brighton fishermen and boatmen, above a memorial tablet recording his ministry could be seen in a bas-relief in white marble the sea and seashore, and in the waves a fishing boat, an exact representation of one the Brighton "luggers." In the foreground on the beach were heaps of nets and fishing gear.

He was a remarkable man, and the effect of his ministry in Brighton was widespread and permanent. Delicate in health, he exercised a wonderful influence among his people, and especially over the rough boatmen and fishermen of Brighton and Hove, so that he earned the title of "the apostle of the Brighton fishermen."

On his death at the early age of 49, there was a spontaneous and general manifestation of regret and esteem such as the loss of no other Brighton clergyman has ever evoked. At the funeral it is estimated that at least a thousand persons were present. A special train from Brighton conveyed some six hundred friends and members of St. Margaret's congregation to Hassocks, the funeral taking place at Keymer. The coffin was borne in turn by twelve fishermen, supported by eight pall bearers, members of St. Margaret's congregation.



St Margaret's Dome & Galleries 1949

During the next seven years the life of the Church was marked by great financial prosperity and some important works were undertaken. The Church was enlarged by the addition of a chancel, costing over £11,000 and the erection of the "Edmund Clay Memorial Schools" at a cost of £2,600, plus a Mission Hall in Cannon Street.

For over twenty years the Church had voluntarily been responsible for a Mission District of 4,000 poor on Carlton Hill in the parish of St. Peter's, maintaining a staff of workers, and meeting all expenses at a cost of nearly £400 a year. Referring to this contribution to Diocesan work, the following passage occurs in the Annual Report of the Bishop of Chichester's Fund for 1910: -

"The Parish of St. Margaret's, Brighton, continues to support the Carlton Hill Mission, and it would be a great satisfaction to the Committee to learn, that the excellent example thus set had been followed by other parishes in a position to provide not only for their own spiritual necessities, but also for those of their poorer brethren in less favoured districts."

The Cannon Street Mission Hall was the centre of much valuable work,

besides affording a home for the Men's Club with a membership of over 100. The Men's Bible Class was held each Sunday afternoon.

An important feature in the work at this centre was the Open-air Campaign in the summer months, meetings being held on the lower parade, opposite the Hotel Metropole every Tuesday and Sunday



© Brighton & Hove RPML

Cannon Street Mission Hall in 1935

evening.

For over forty years St. Margaret's maintained a Missioner to the boatmen and fishermen along the 41 miles of sea front in Brighton and Hove. There was an annual charge of some £90 upon the liberal congregation. For the use of these men an arch was provided on the lower parade east of the West Pier, and was found of the greatest value to the fishermen on wet days and in rough weather.

In 1959 the Brighton and Hove Regency Society pleaded for a preservation order to be made for the church but the Brighton Town Council would not agree to this. The 12.5 cwt bell was removed to the church of Christ the King, South Patcham in January 1959. Demolition of St. Margaret's Church started in June 1959.

Pick your own with the Grandchildren

On three occasions this summer we have been to the Roundstone Farm near Worthing to pick fruit and vegetables with the grandchildren and sometimes their mother.

Chloe and Dylan were very good with Chloe following instructions to look under the leaves to find the best raspberries although she quickly got a taste for them and more seem to be eaten than go into her little plastic punnet. See the photograph on the right.



In July we were able to pick strawberries, raspberries, plums, blackcurrants and runner beans. We also came home with freshly dug potatoes which were delicious to eat.

The fruit and vegetables provided meals for several days.

The second time we went we again picked raspberries and a few strawberries but they were much harder to find. Dylan helped

harvest some sweetcorn, which is one of Marjorie's and the children's favourites.

When we went on a Saturday at the beginning of September, hoping to pick Victoria plums we discovered that the crop was finished and the only fruit left to pick was late raspberries and blackberries. Picking the raspberries was much harder than it had been earlier in the season.

After picking raspberries we went and picked some more sweetcorn, their final crop of the season, two patches of sweetcorn had already been cut down as they had finished cropping.

Marjorie and Alison decided they would like some beetroot, dwarf beans, runner beans, broccoli, savoy cabbage and a pumpkin.



Dylan harvesting sweetcorn. Marjorie and Alison with some of the beetroot the children helped them pull up.

It's some years since we last went fruit picking there and the crops are now located in different places as they rotate the crops in fields.

It is quite a long way from the car park to the far end of the fields and so a tractor pulling a large trailer converted to carry people

including buggies does a circular trip around the site every 10 or 15 minutes and stops at the locations of the various fruit and vegetables. The children really enjoyed having a ride on a trailer pulled by a tractor and the visits there were a great success.

St. Mary Magdalen Day – sermon preached by Fr Martin Powell

Mary Magdalen has been the victim of identity theft three times!

I don't know if you have read the DaVinci Code, but Mary features quite heavily in the whole baffling and ludicrous conspiracy, this is the Mary Magdalene thriller, the holy man and the girl friend, all nonsense, but it's fascinating that Mary Magdalene should enter public consciousness at this stage of history, after centuries of ignorance. Maybe she has something to say to us.

And then for many years she was identified as the same woman as the prostitute of St Luke Chapter 7. There is no evidence for this at all. She is also occasionally associated with the Mary of Bethany - sister of Martha and Lazarus. We know little about her which is probably why these attempts to identify her with other characters occur - as we try to expand her character and locate her with greater clarification within the account of Our Lord's life and ministry.

What is clear is that Mary Magdalene has been cured of some mental disorder which today might be called neurosis but, despite the cure, still shows some signs of neurosis - certainly in St John's account of her witnessing to the resurrection, when she agitatedly runs to and fro seemingly blind to what is right in front of her!

What is also clear - and, besides, what is much more significant - is that Mary Magdalene is the first witness to the resurrection both in St Mark's Gospel and here in St John's Gospel. In St Mark, she is a witness alongside Mary the mother of James and Salome.

St John distils the drama and sharpens it with Mary Magdalene alone at the empty tomb and alone in the presence of the risen Lord.

But, whether St Mark or St John, in both accounts Mary Magdalene is sent away - by a young man, an angel, in St Mark and by Jesus himself in St John - sent away to tell the disciples that scripture has been fulfilled. Sent away - the very meaning of the word 'apostle'

and yet how often do we call the disciples apostles and forget that Mary Magdalene was the first apostle when we talk animatedly and, dare one say, neurotically, about the apostolic ministry of the Church?

The woman, Mary Magdalene, stands at the threshold of the apostolic ministry while her successors in our own day have only just been allowed to walk through the door because of prejudice and judgement.

After all, the Disciples at this point are pretty useless! Where are they? Little care was normally taken over the corpses of the crucified and yet it is a respected member of the Council, Joseph of Arimathea, who bravely requests the body and provides Jesus with what is effectively a rich man's funeral.

But this is the eve of the Sabbath and, as such, the nicer points of the funeral rites like the anointing of the body must wait until the day of rest is past. Where are the disciples? At the earliest possible opportunity after the Sabbath, three women come to honour the dead as best they may with spices, in the way that we might now bring flowers to lay at the tomb. Where are the disciples? One biblical commentator suggests that they were practical-minded men who just couldn't see the point.

How many bishops and church leaders could that be said of today?

We should be thankful to God that the proclamation of the Gospel - at least on the first Easter Day - wasn't left to practical-minded men...!

A woman - and a woman with mental illness - a woman who might have been a prostitute - a woman who was but human and prone to further sin beyond the encounters we read of her - is chosen by God to be the first witness to the resurrection. And the Church spends lifetime after lifetime debating what to do with people who don't conform to a western middle class ideal which probably never really existed and certainly doesn't exist now.

The feast day of Mary Magdalene is a day when judgement is off the agenda for twenty-four hours: a day to celebrate the apostolic ministry of women, a day to question whether practical-minded

men and imagination can ever be reconciled, a day when we can all stand at the mouth of the empty tomb despite however much baggage with which we are weighed down.

But don't go there if you don't like taking risks; don't go there if you fear contamination; don't go there if you prefer a horse designed by a committee. Stay with the practical-minded men and try and work out what the point is. It'll take you a long time and you're unlikely to reach any conclusions so, if I were you, I'd just run to the tomb and have done with it.

You'll find there that life's for living and that the judgement against you has been taken away. You'll find Mary Magdalene there - and a whole host of tax collectors and sinners pouring through the gate of life eternal ahead of you. Don't get left behind.

This is a great feast day for the Church. It's a day when - for once - our heart beats in time with our imagination and we glimpse that all things are indeed possible with God.

Eastbourne in May

This May Sheila and I visited our favourite seaside resort we stayed for a week in a comfortable ground floor flat close to the Arndale shopping centre and very close to the seafront.



Eastbourne Pier and Beach

We visited the pier with great views of the coast , we very much enjoyed the well kept gardens, and spent time looking around the shops. One morning I visited the Towner art gallery showing two very different types of art work, one was abstract and the other, work created by schools in the area.

We love Eastbourne and intend to visit again in October.

Sheila and Reg

Hire the church hall for your events

The hourly rate is £17.00

Concessions apply for Electoral Church members
(Regrettably 18th Birthday Parties are excluded)

Commercial Organisation rates are £25.00 per
hour

Reducing to £17.00 after 4 hours

Telephone: Sue Docherty 07526 455 302

e-mail: sdocherty55@gmail.com

Mark Boase Plastering

**For all your plastering
and small building works**

Free estimates

no job too small.

 **07917 154 241**



CHRISTOPHER STRINGER

FUNERAL SERVICE

Funeral Directors and Monumental Masons

Funerals can be arranged in the privacy of your own home. Christopher is a committed Christian and a Church organist. He has a special understanding to the needs of fellow Christians.

Pre Paid Funeral Plan

Many people are paying and arranging for their funeral in advance. We offer a pre paid funeral which allows for the funeral service of your choice.

If you would like to discuss any requirements that you may have, please call Christopher.

...with quality of service and care, we are
a shoulder to rely on

67 High Street,
Rottingdean, Brighton
BN2 7HE

49 Barcombe Road,
Moulsecomb, Brighton
BN1 9JQ

Tel: 01273 306000 Tel: 01273 691704

Email: christopher.stringer@cpjfield.co.uk



SELECTED
Independent
FUNERAL HOMES®
Member by Invitation

