

The vestry through the years



A new vestry was added to the church in 1874. In 1886 the vestry door was moved from the chancel to the south aisle, with the December issue of the magazine reporting: *"This effects a great improvement in many ways. Some extra room is gained in the chancel for choir seats, the plain and rough wall which hitherto has disfigured the south aisle is greatly improved by the introduction of the handsome carved doorway; and on the occasion of festivals the clergy and choir will not be compelled to face all weathers in their return from the heated Church to the vestry. The greatest gain, however, perhaps is inside the vestry, which by the*

alteration has been rendered capable of a far more convenient arrangement." While this was happening, work was also carried out on repairing and improving the heating "apparatus".

This work necessitated the lowering of a portion of the hot water pipes, and when the pipes were emptied it was considered a convenient opportunity to examine the heating apparatus with a view to its improvement. Several serious defects in its arrangement were pointed out by an experienced engineer, and these were rectified.

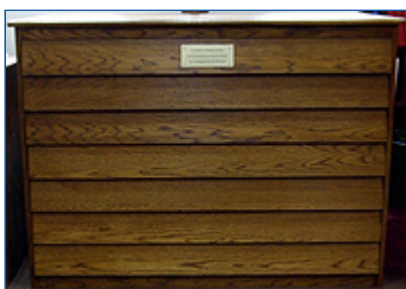
In 1919 *"A very useful anthracite stove has been presented to the Church, placed in the Vestry, and has turned an ice-house into a very comfortable room. This gift is much appreciated, not least by the organist and choir and myself."*

In 1959 the vestry was cleared of dry rot by voluntary workers and later redecorated by the Young People's Fellowship. This transformed the cold, dingy, damp old vestry into a bright cosy room. The gift of a piano from an anonymous donor enabled it to be used as a song-room by the choir, and it became an excellent place for meetings and classes.



Stone carving over the vestry door

There was another outbreak of dry rot in 1987 causing extensive damage to the floors at the east end. It is probable that after each attack fungi and spores lay dormant in the building. This time one of the cast iron Victorian rainwater heads had become blocked repeatedly and consequently rusted through, soaking the vestry wall. In the end, the rot, which came from an old timber member buried in the brickwork, affected only the lower ends of a few of the vestry roof members, which were fairly easily replaced. As the vestry had to be cleared for this work, it made sense to take advantage of the opportunity to carry out a long overdue redecoration.



A vestments press for storing the clergy's vestments was bought in 2009 with some money left to the church, in memory of Margery Orton, and placed in the vestry.

The above information covers the period from when any records could be found until November 2016. This was when Revd Derek Winterburn became St James's tenth vicar and from this time onwards any new information can be found on the main site.

The vestments press