

The 150th Anniversary Service - 2013 December



A sunny winter's day saw the Bishop of London visit St James's on Sunday December 8th, 2013. The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dr Richard Chartres, KCVO, was following in the footsteps of his predecessors Archibald Campbell Tait who, in December 11th 1863 came to consecrate the new church of St James and institute Fitzroy John Fitz Wygram as the first vicar; and of David Hope, who laid the dedication stone of the church hall in 1993. Bishop Richard came to celebrate with us as we concluded our celebration of the church and parish's 150th anniversary. We were also joined by the Mayor of Richmond, Cllr Meena Bond, and Dr Vince Cable, MP, and other friends and supporters from the local community.

The service began with a piece specially written by composer and musician Brendan Ashe, and then Bishop Richard entered through the west door and greeted us. In his sermon, Bishop Richard spoke of what had happened in 1863 – amongst other things, the first section of the Tube was opened, and the Red Cross and Football Association were founded. He said that the Church needs to recover the right sort of confidence, practise compassion, and be open to creativity. So close to Christmas, the bishop reminded us of God's generosity seen in Jesus, and the way in which he embodies God's plan for humanity. He calls people into self-giving love. The bishop concluded: *"The two thousand years since the birth of Christ can be viewed as a dreary round of greed and violence, deaf to the love-song of the angels. But there is an energy in the world which flows from the generosity of God who, when he communicated, came in person to draw us into his way of compassion. He is the hope of the world. He is the hope which you determined should be visible on Hampton Hill."*



Music featured strongly in the service – the Choristers of Hampton Hill Junior School sung 'The Lord bless you and keep you' by John Rutter, and the church Choir sung two pieces set to music by Charles Villiers Stanford, Psalm 150 and Te Deum in Bb. Joyful singing of hymns combined with this to make it a great occasion of thanksgiving.

After the service, the bishop renamed the church hall the 'Fitz Wygram Hall' together with the Mayor and two church members, one of 8 and one of 89! The occasion was a fitting way to crown the year's events.

Revd Peter Vannozzi, 2013 December



Bishop Richard entering through the west door



The choir processing through the church



Joyful singing



A reading



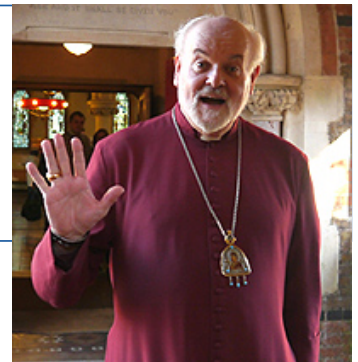
Bishop Richard



Reading the Gospel



The choir singing





The reception in the hall



The reception in the hall