



Friends of St Michael's

Patron: Sir Roy Strong

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Last August a small group of Friends of St Michael met with the aim of raising funds:
To contribute to the conservation of the fabric, fixtures and fittings including the works of art within the church; to promote the use of the building for cultural and community events

What has happened so far:

John Cox, opera director and local resident took the chair with Jonathan Prichard as vice chairman. Sir Roy Strong continues as Patron.

Our initial aim was to increase awareness and membership of the Friends and its purpose with a display in the church ready for Heritage weekend 2009 and a re-launch party in January 2010.

In fact there were two parties. The first in January was postponed because of snow but the few intrepid souls who toiled up the steps to the candlelit church, were very enthusiastic and encouraged our second effort in April when over 200 people enjoyed drinks, canapés, music from Michael Finnissey, Philip Adams and the choir. Above all they enjoyed the gathering. The church looked its very best in the evening sunlight.

On June 25th we held our first major fund raising dinner. The splendid nave at Saint Michael's was transformed by ten beautifully decorated and candlelit round tables with rose petals scattered over them. One hundred people enjoyed a generous and leisurely meal. Again the church looked magnificent and worthy of all our efforts. We are grateful to Father Robert for letting us use the building in this way. Almost £5,000 was raised from the evening.

New dates for your 2010 diary:

Heritage weekend September 9th – 12th

The church will be open on Saturday between 10 and 4 and on Sunday between 3 and 5.

Guided tours on Saturday at 10 and Sunday at 3.30.

Breakfast will be served as usual in the hall on Saturday between 9 and 11

Saturday 18th September at 6pm

Domus Ecclesiae and all that an illustrated talk by John Wells-Thorpe

Admission £5 to include a free glass of wine, there will be a pay bar too.

(Flyer enclosed for you and your friends; contact the Parish office if you need more 01273 822284 parishoffice@saintmichaelsbrighton.org)

Saturday 9th October at 2.45 pm

Friends' Annual lecture: *Oxford and the Pre-Raphaelites*

An illustrated talk by Jon Whiteley, Senior Assistant Keeper in the Department of Western Art in the Ashmolean Museum. Admission £7 to include a cream tea

At 1.15 before the lecture, Philip Adams, Director of Music, will give a free organ recital of music from the period.

Membership

Membership has increased dramatically to 156 including 8 life members

Donations

We have been excited, since we started our drive, by the number of people who have given donations, over £620 arising out of the dinner alone

First conservation project – we are almost there

For the stabilisation repairs to the paper murals over the West door and behind the Sanctuary which are in a deplorable condition and need urgent rescue, we have been quoted £5,000. We need only a little more. Mark Sandiford, chief paper conservator for the National Trust prepared a condition report on the paper murals estimating holding repairs to cost just over £5,000 while removal and conservation, £35,000. The first priority is to secure stabilisation in situ. We are only a little short of this sum so we hope work will begin this autumn.

Members and Volunteers

To have raised so much in so short a time is very pleasing. We are very grateful to all who have become members and persuaded their friends to join, knowing that the art and artefacts of Saint Michael's are worth preserving; in addition we acknowledge the tremendous efforts of those members who volunteered help and took over the organisation of the dinner - planning, cooking, accounting, decorating and recruiting.

We are also very pleased to have had so many offers from people willing to help us raise funds by giving talks, recitals, food and wine tasting etc. A programme for these is being developed and will spread over the next year or so

Are there more of you who could help with any of the tasks that need doing in a voluntary organisation such as ours, from envelope stuffing to design and marketing, accounting and all the steps in between? Please let me know.

This year has started really well; we need to maintain the momentum, recruit more members and have many more enjoyable fund raising events.

John Cox
Chairman
August 2010