



# THE flyer



## The west windows

Alison Minns talks to restorer Clifford Durant

*Clifford G. Durant & Son of Horsham uncovered faults in earlier work when restoring the windows*

*Can you explain briefly the background to the restoration?*

The Morris firm was not the best studio in terms of quality and much of its work was quite poor. Correct firing temperatures were not reached and the painted oxides disappeared or on

occasion borax was added to the melt, affecting the oxides.

Many Sussex churches, such as St Wilfrid's in Haywards Heath have had to remove their Morris windows and replace them with plain glass.

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**Friends gave £10,000**

**towards the project**

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Burne-Jones and Ford Madox Brown had a rather better record. The windows in St Michael's north aisle is the work of Charles Eamer Kempe where paint loss does not exist as this glass was fired correctly.

*How exactly did you go about the restoration?*

An attempt was made about thirty years ago to restore the Burne-Jones windows but it was a poor job which left them in an even worse condition.

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# Social events in 2013

**The Members' Party** got the year off to a good start, brightening up the dark days of February with mulled wine, canapés and live music.

**The Friends' Annual Dinner** is fast becoming legendary. Guests were astonished at the attention to detail



that had gone into both the preparation and presentation of the mouth-watering meal. It was a great opportunity to meet old and new friends over home baked ham joints and delicious desserts.

**The Jazz Evening and Fish and Chips Supper** was very congenial. Imogen Ryall, Rod Hart and Paul Whitten provided excellent foot-tapping entertainment in the cosy church hall.

**Nicole Urbanski's Fashion Show** showcasing this talented Hove fashion designer's spring and summer collections was one of the year's highlights, attracting 120 guests.

Nicole has made costumes for

Glyndebourne, worked alongside names such as Jean Paul Gaultier and designed a children's collection for Paul Smith. Nicole's Church Road boutique specialises in fashion and accessories made in England with a touch of continental elegance. Nicole also offers a bespoke service.

**Our Indian Evening** was a sell-out. Author and Friend Jeanne Openshaw engaged us with an authoritative overview of Diwali, the Festival of Light which celebrates the triumph of good over evil, light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance. We were shown vibrantly coloured images of deities, including the multi-armed Durga trampling her husband Shiva into submission.

**Shivani Joshi**, beautifully dressed in traditional costume, entranced us with two dances: one a 5000 year old traditional Bharatanatyam South Indian dance, the other straight from Bollywood.



We chatted to our Indian guests, admired a selection of books about India and indulged ourselves on Cobra beer and delicious Indian dishes supplied by Chaula's of East Street.

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**Read about our 2014 events in the February *flyer***

# Talks and tours

**The Annual Lecture** was given by the erudite, amusing and sartorially elegant Stephen Calloway, curator of the V&A's exhibition *The Cult of Beauty*. His subject was the Aesthetic Movement, whose exponents included Burne-Jones, Morris and



Rossetti, but Calloway explained how the movement covered so much more than painting.

**David Robson** gave a well-received talk entitled *New into Old: Karljosef Schattner, Architect of Eichstätt*. His main subject was ostensibly the little-known municipal architect Schattner who integrated modern with Baroque buildings, but David skilfully managed to introduce a local touch, relating his 'new into old' subject,

not only to Eichstätt but also to Brighton and indeed, St Michael's.

**David Beever**s, Keeper of the Royal Pavilion, repeated his highly popular Connoisseurs' Church Tour. We were spellbound by David's enthusiasm for the church, depth of knowledge and erudition.

## First impressions

### Alison Minns

It was yet another subscription to a worthy cause but I joined the FoSM in October 2012 because I wanted to attend the annual Friends' talk by Tate Curator Carol Jacobi on the Pre-Raphaelites. It worked out great value to join at that point with 'free' entry to her talk as well as membership extended until January 2014.

Carol's talk was both fascinating and informative, enabling me to view the Tate's PRB exhibition with a much more tutored eye.

However, I was keen to see what other events the FoSM offered, whether they were really my sort of thing, what new friends I might make and whether it would be worth renewing my membership for 2014.

I have, of course, been absolutely delighted I joined – to the point where I have even agreed to edit the *flyer* (at least until someone else volunteers!)

### **west windows continued**

We had to strip all the lead away from the glass and undertake a complete restoration of both the original and the 'restored' windows, retaining all the original glass but replacing all the lead cane. This entailed soldering thousands of black lead joints with English hand drawn lead cane (superior to the Belgian or German varieties.)

#### *What were the challenges of the job?*

The job took about 20 weeks - far longer than we originally thought because of the failings of the previous project.

The wrong lead and cement had been used, the thickness of the lead

was incorrect and we had to ensure we did not break the fragile glass.

#### *What were the joys?*

The fact that we've stopped the rot and given the windows another hundred years of life.

#### *What's special about the St Michael's windows?*

Burne-Jones's loose design has a particular beauty. Though the quality of the windows' glass and paint is less good (Charles Eamer Kempe was a superior painter), the style is of exceptional quality. It's lovely glass.

I've worked for St Michael's for many years and have a very soft spot for it!

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## **Contact the Friends**

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## **Have you renewed your membership for 2014?**

Annual: Single £15 Couple £20  
Life: Single £150 Couple £200

Download a form from our website:  
[www.friendsofsaintmichaels.co.uk/](http://www.friendsofsaintmichaels.co.uk/)  
Or

Send your name and address together with a cheque or bank Standing Order mandate to:

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## **Why not introduce a friend? 2014?**