



fly the flyer

The Friends has a great sense of community

**Alison Minns talks to Chris Dawes
new Chair of The Friends**

Can you tell me a little about yourself.

I've always loved Brighton and Hove. My mother's family moved to Hove in 1930 and my father worked in Shoreham. My parents met at the Regent Ballroom and we had family holidays in Hove. My parents moved back here when I went to university. It was only later that I began to appreciate its extraordinary architectural richness and, in my role in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, did what I could to help preserve it. In a speech I wrote for John Major promoting the establishment of the National Lottery, he used my example of the West Pier as the kind of challenging project which only the Lottery could fund. My work sponsoring English Heritage and the Lottery Fund brought me a much greater appreciation of the merits of historic buildings and their importance, not only artistically but also in defining people's sense of identity with and appreciation for special places.

How long have you been a Friend ?

About three years. Having been a member of other local societies I discovered the Friends following its re-launch under my predecessor John Cox, and wanted to do a bit more myself to help preserve an important part of this city's heritage.

What's so special about St Michael's?

It's Grade I listed: about 2% of English buildings are listed and only 2.5% of those are Grade I. It's the only church in Sussex among Simon Jenkins' 100 best churches in England. There's enormous interest in art, as can be



seen by the popularity of London's blockbuster shows, but in St Michael's we have work of equivalent importance on our doorstep.

What are you particularly looking forward to in your new role?

What's especially impressed me is how well the Church and Friends work together. Father Robert and his team go out of their way to make Friends' events possible. I've particularly enjoyed the annual dinner, fashion show and Indian evening. While the church does much to involve the community, the Friends' focus is on the outstanding

Bring along your friends to the ever-popular Friends' Annual Dinner Saturday 5th July

Jane Osler explains the secret of its success

Tickets are now on sale for the 5th Friends' Annual Dinner on Saturday 5th July at 7.30pm in the splendid church nave.

The Annual Dinner – a tradition started with the re-launch of the Friends - is an extremely popular event in the Friends' calendar. The ambience is particularly special and it's always a very convivial evening. Ten beauti-



fully decorated, candlelit tables each seating ten people are set up in the nave. The concept is that of a family dinner party with each table having a 'host' or 'hostess' who carves the joint, looks after the people on their table,

and generally ensures that everyone's evening goes with a swing.

The menu uses locally sourced ingredients which are freshly cooked by a team of around ten Friends, ably supported by 'vegetable chopper' helpers. Prior to the big night, initial menu suggestions are put forward and sample dishes are cooked and tested in advance and any adjustments made. It's a real team effort.

"Lovely setting for dinner last night.": Sally Bedeau tweeted after last year's dinner

Tickets cost £35 and include a welcome drink, a delicious home-cooked three course dinner, plus cheese, coffee and truffles. Wine is available to buy and five lucky raffle-ticket purchasers will win two bottles of champagne

Tickets and enquiries:
Tony Bailey 01273 729342
tony@powissquare.com

Autumn events

Fri Sept 5th
6.00 for 6.30 pm

Brighton 1750 - 1820

The rise of England's most famous resort
Sue Berry
Associate Fellow Inst of
Inst. of Historical Research
University of London

Sat Oct 11th
2.30 for 3.00 pm

The Annual Lecture
Maxwell Hutchinson
Well known architect and
Television broadcaster

Fri Nov 7th
6.30 pm onwards

Gypsy Jazz & food
Bass, guitar and singer

Our new photographer



The Flyer now has a photographer, Martin Knott, on board.

Martin is a retired GP from Ovingdean who has transmogrified into an architectural historian. He now spends part of his retirement lecturing and running U3A classes on architecture.

He has a particular interest in churches and already has an impressive bank of images of St Michael and all Angels which he has generously and enthusiastically shared with us.

David Beevers' Connoisseur's Tour

Janet Barry reports

Notwithstanding being temporarily seated in penitential choir stalls, the Friends of St. Michael's had a splendid time at David Beevers' excellent Connoisseur's Talk on the beauties of the Burges designs for the church.

We were treated to informative and amusing anecdotes and guided through the intricacies of designing and decorating, in French Gothic style, the 'Cathedral of the back streets.'

Of especial interest were the carved capitals commemorating the rescue of two sisters during the Indian Mutiny (two figures with elephant and tiger above the pulpit, whilst opposite they are being greeted by their brother outside a city gate).

Those of the Friends who thoughtfully came equipped with binoculars had an excellent close-up view of the beauties of the carving. The detailed history behind this story is largely unknown and David Beevers suggested that it might make an interesting area of research for someone to follow up.

It was a measure of the appeal of David Beevers' talk that it even attracted one member of the Friends of St. Michael's all the way from the Isle of Wight! The session ended with a most enjoyable lunch of delicious home-made soup and splendid Sussex cheeses.

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quality of the building, so everyone of any or no religion can be part of the St Michael's community and contribute to protecting this important part of Brighton's heritage and at the same time, have fun together.

The Friends is a group with a great sense of community and I hope we can build on that and ensure that everyone locally knows they can be part of it and that beyond the city anyone with an interest in preserving the best of our buildings can also play their part.

John Cox steps down

John Cox has stepped down as Chair of The Friends due to the pressure of other commitments. John was a key figure in the re-launch of The Friends in 2010. He personally financed the survey of the paper murals, recruited the restorer and had oversight of their restoration. His experience and contacts in the world of international opera have been a source of valuable advice on many aspects of conservation and restoration.

Speaking to The Flyer, John said:

"Re-establishing The Friends has lead to many enjoyable evenings. I am thrilled to learn that Chris Dawes has agreed to carry on the work. I look forward to the The Friends being even more successful in future years.



I would like to thank the members for all their support. It is their enthusiasm and involvement which has made The Friends what it is today."

John, a resident of Powis Square for many years, held successive appointments as first director of production at Glyndebourne, artistic director of Scottish Opera and production director of the Royal Opera Covent Garden. He has directed productions in major opera houses across the world including San Francisco, New York, Sydney and Munich.

John will remain an active member but his leadership of The Friends will be missed.

Which events do you prefer?

Friends events are very popular – indeed some have even been oversubscribed, but we'd like to know what and when is best for you. **Please tick all that apply.**

TIMES	M	T	W	T	F	S
Morning						
Afternoon						
After 6 pm						

EVENTS OF INTEREST

Illustrated talks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social events with food and drink	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guided tours of the church	<input type="checkbox"/>
Events combining these features	<input type="checkbox"/>
The annual dinner	<input type="checkbox"/>
Group cultural visits and excursions	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments and suggestions

Please email your reply to the editor Alison Minns or just send her a note c/o the Parish Office.

CONTACT THE FRIENDS

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www.friendsofsaintmichaels.co.uk

Annual Accounts 2013 (summary)

Income	£
Subscriptions.....	2,890
Donations.....	1,163
Inland Revenue.....	618
Events	10,231
	14,902

Expenditure

Events.....	5,109
Printing & postage.....	224
Chair presentation	108
	5,441

Reserves

Contribution 2013	9,461
Reserves end 2012	14,301
To West window	(11,000)
Funds for new work	12,762

Church watch

On Saturdays pairs of volunteers take turns to sit in the church for two hours to welcome visitors. If you would like to know more, please contact the Parish Office.

MEMBERSHIP 2014

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

Download a form from our website:
www.friendsofsaintmichaels.co.uk
or

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

Alan Legg,
Friends' Membership Secretary,
Parish Office, St Michael & All Angels
St Michael's Place,
Brighton BN1 3FU