



# Friends of St Michael's

Patron: Sir Roy Strong

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Spring 2012



## A very significant year

In 2012 *Saint Michael and All Angels*, Brighton, celebrates 150 years since its completion and consecration. As you know, the Friends have been established to contribute to the overhaul and repair of the fabric and fixtures of this magnificent church, and also to promote the use of the building for cultural and community events

During this year, the Friends are committed to raise £10,000 to support work to The West Window of the Bodley Church.

## Fundraising project for 2012

The great West Window is one of the finest achievements of Pre-Raphaelite glass making, and one of the most important stained glass windows of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It represents the Morris firm at its most innovative.

In 1909, the stained glass artist Selwyn Image wrote: '*Brighton possesses the finest modern piece of stained glass that has ever been done...for the magnificence of its design, the sense... of being in the presence of supernatural beings, the perfectness of its splendid colouring...this specimen seemed to be perfection*'.

This year's fundraising project will contribute essential finance for work on stabilising this window. This is a matter of urgency: although the West Window is a national art treasure, it is in a precarious state, and members of the congregation can hear rattling on a windy day.

Our fundraising project is especially appropriate for this year – the year of the Pre-Raphaelites.



Photo: Rex Harris

(above) 'St Michael and the Dragon'  
Peter Paul Marshall



Photo: Rex Harris

(above) 'St Raphael' (detail)  
William Morris and  
Dante Gabriel Rossetti



(above) 'St Gabriel' (detail)  
William Morris

Photo: Rex Harris

## A celebration of William Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites

The **William Morris Gallery** in Walthamstow will reopen after re-development in July. ***Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian avant-garde***, the first major survey of the Pre-Raphaelites in almost 30 years will take place at Tate Britain, 12 September 2012 – 13 January 2013. The film "**Effie**", which looks at the relationship between John Ruskin and his teenage bride, with a script by Emma Thompson, who also has a starring role, is scheduled for release in October.

To complement these highlights, ***S. Michael's*** looks forward to welcoming many more visitors to study, and enjoy, its Pre-Raphaelite glass and associated works.

## Friends of S. Michael's: events for 2012

The **Ladies' Lunch** on 20<sup>th</sup> April, the inaugural event of the season, was thoroughly enjoyed by all. It was oversubscribed with a long waiting list. There was a Cordon Bleu spring lunch, two interludes with fabulous flamenco from Ana and José Dueñas León, and a most generous raffle. Our Chair and Vice Chair, Canon Robert Fayers and his staff, and other valiant male members of the Friends, were most elegant waiters.

Many thanks to the ladies on the "Ladies' Lunch team" for creating an immensely successful occasion. Thanks also to the generosity of Hire-all, Sahara restaurant, The Spanish Food Company and Jules Parkers Pilates.



Photo: Rachel Hunter



Photo: Rachel Hunter

Left: Margy Nixon, Organiser, with Ann Smith, Friends' Secretary; Right: Pauline Messum, Organiser, with Peggy Guggenheim

## Upcoming events

The Friends are staging two special events on 22 and 23 June to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ***S. Michael's***. Our patron, **Sir Roy Strong** – former director of the National Portrait Gallery and the V&A, art historian, writer, broadcaster, landscape designer and raconteur – will play an important role in each of these. Booking forms are attached, so do book early to avoid disappointment.

**Annual Dinner**, 22 June. Arrive 7.30pm for a welcoming drink, followed by a four course dinner. **Sir Roy Strong** will be the guest speaker. The usual raffle will be complemented by our first auction.

**Conversazione**, 23 June 3pm. **Sir Roy Strong** will be in conversation with his friend and former colleague, **Dr Charles Saumarez Smith CBE**, Secretary and Chief Executive of the Royal Academy of Arts, former Director of the National Gallery and National Portrait Gallery, and former Head of Research at the V&A. They will talk informally about their lives in the arts and their personal interests. It promises to be a very stimulating occasion.



Sir Roy Strong

Photo: Jonathan Myles-Lea





Misericord depicting a grasshopper riding on a snail

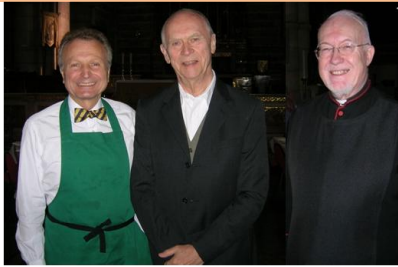
Photo: Rex Harris

## The Autumn season

*Full details and dates will be available in our June newsletter*

Events will include **A Connoisseurs' Tour of S. Michael's**, with **David Beevers FSA**, Keeper of the Royal Pavilion. This will be a unique opportunity for an in-depth look at the architecture and treasures of the church, including a close study of the Pre-Raphaelite windows.

**Dr Carol Jacobi**, Curator at Tate Britain and expert on the Pre-Raphaelites, will give the **Annual Lecture** in October. Art historian **Alexandra Loske**, who gave such an interesting and lively presentation on *George and his Giraffe* last autumn, will return by popular demand. She will give an autumn lecture on "*Charlotte: the Forgotten Princess*", daughter of George IV, to complement the exhibition of the same name in the Prince Regent Gallery, Royal Pavilion.



Jonathan Prichard, Vice Chair of the Friends, John Cox, Chair, and Canon Robert Fayers – "waiters" at the Ladies' Lunch

Photo: Rachel Hunter

## S. Michael's needs new Friends

The finest architects, artists and craftsmen were employed to build and decorate **S. Michael's**, but there was no provision for the care and conservation of the church, so the fundraising work of the Friends is vital.

Do bring your friends, who might be interested in joining our Friends, to our events. At £10 a year, £15 for joint membership, £100 for single life membership, and £150 for joint life membership, it is very good value.



(above) 'The Annunciation'  
William Morris

Photo: Rex Harris

## THE WEST WINDOW OF S. MICHAEL'S

### The Friends' project for 2012

William Morris was inspired by medieval stained glass. The great West Window, 1862, consists of two windows, each of two lancets, with a six-foil above and a rose in the gable consisting of a seven-foil, surrounded by seven circles. The magnificent preponderance of angels recalls Burne-Jones's remark: '*The more materialist science becomes, the more angels shall I paint; their wings are my protest in favour of the immortality of the soul.*'

**Left window, left light:** St Michael, the archangel. *Ford Madox Brown.*

**Left window, right light:** St Raphael. *William Morris*, with the face redrawn by *Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, as Morris was unhappy with his own work. (*detail photograph P. 1*)

**Six-foil above:** St Michael and the Dragon. *Peter Paul Marshall.* (*photograph P. 1*)

**Right window, left light:** St Uriel. *Ford Madox Brown.*

**Right window, right light:** St Gabriel. *William Morris.* (*detail photograph P. 2*)

**Six-foil above:** the Annunciation. *William Morris.* (*photograph P. 3*)

**Rose window centre:** Virgin and Child; circles: Angels playing bells. *Edward Burne-Jones* (*photograph P. 3*)

Photo: Rex Harris



(above) 'Angel playing Bells'  
Edward Burne-Jones

**All images of the stained glass at S. Michael's featured in this newsletter are from the West Window.**