



the flyer

Vice Chair Jonathan Prichard thanks Friends for raising “a magnificent sum”

In the past year we have welcomed a new chair – Christopher Dawes, and treasurer - Roger Fine. Tribute must be paid to John Cox and Andrew Harvey for their sterling work over the first five years.

In 2014 The Friends raised just over £6,500. This magnificent sum came from a number of very successful events: the annual dinner, a talk by Alexandra Loske, a tour lead by David Beevers, a gypsy jazz with fish and chips evening and the annual lecture given by Maxwell Hutchinson, former President of the RIBA and well known broadcaster.

*£2500 given towards
new projects*

At the same time The Friends made two grants to St Michael's of £2,500 in total. These two grants were £2,000 towards the work on the emergency clerestory window repairs in the Bodley church chancel following storm damage and £500 towards commissioning the

Carthy survey report on the Bodley chancel. The report has identified a number of potential restoration and refurbishment projects as well as given a better picture of the state of the fabric and decoration.

In addition the Friends covered the cost of printing the well received free takeaway guide to the church. Visitors have commented how helpful the guide is when touring the church so enhancing their experience of one of Brighton's ecclesiastical jewels.

Taking into account expenditure, The Friends ended up with a surplus of nearly £4,000 for the year. At the end of 2014 there was £18,450 cash in the bank available for supporting future major repairs or refurbishment which the parochial church council has started to identify in terms of priorities and achievability.

Thank you to all members and supporters of The Friends for another enjoyable and financially successful year.

David Beevers reveals a thank offering for deliverance

Notable amongst the memorials at St Michael's Church are a pair of carved capitals surmounting the piers at the east end of the nave in the 'new' church. The capitals are on either side of the nave, one above the pulpit, the other on the opposite side. They commemorate an event which took place during the Indian Mutiny and Great Rebellion of 1857 when Miss Eleanor Morgan and her sister were rescued by their brother after being driven into hiding by mutinous sepoys of the East India Company. On the north side above the pulpit the two sisters are shown in the jungle surrounded by dangerous animals amongst which are an elephant and a tiger, conventional symbols of India. For the British, the tiger, especially, became a stock motif of what was taken to be Indian savagery. On the opposite side the same figures are greeted outside a city gate (possibly meant to represent Agra) by their brother, depicted as an heroic soldier.

Misses Morgan, both of whom died, according to the St Michael's Vestry Minute Book, in or before July 1913. It is a pity that so little is recorded of this fascinating episode; it would be interesting to know more about the sisters and the circumstances of their



photo: Martin Knott

rescue by their brother. Perhaps a reader of this short article might be inspired to look through the local newspapers for an obituary notice.

The Mutiny and Great Rebellion in India started from modest beginnings as a mutiny amongst Indian sepoys. Within a short time it enveloped large areas of northern and central British India. Fearing for their lives, many Europeans were forced to hide in latrines, wear Indian dress, or flee to the jungle. By mid August 1857 60,000 troops had mutinied, two thirds of whom were from the Bengal Army. The rebellion spread to the countryside and threatened to extinguish British power. It traumatised the colonial authorities and led to major changes in the way India was governed. It also entered popular consciousness: between 1857 and Independence in 1947 no fewer than seventy novels on the subject were written.



photo: Martin Knott

The capitals were carved between 1902-1912 by Thomas Nicholls the younger, the son of William Burges's favourite sculptor, also called Thomas. They were presented by the

Community Café

Free wi fi

Friends are invited to visit the new community café in the church hall. Run by volunteers, the café opens every Tuesday and Thursday from 9 am to 1 pm serving a range

of coffees, hot and cold drinks and freshly prepared snacks

The café is available for use by local groups and clubs on a regular or ad hoc basis; access to the church can also be arranged during opening times. For further details contact the Parish Office 01273 822284.

Jackie Lythell listens in on a lively and fascinating ‘Conversation’ between Sir Peter Bazalgette and Simon Martin

Sir Peter has chaired Arts Council England for two and a half years. He has many media interests and has devised some very successful television formats including *Changing Rooms*, *Ground Force* and UK *Big Brother*. He is a former Chair of English National Opera and among his many other interests he currently chairs the Crossness Engines Trust.

Simon Martin is a writer, curator and Artistic Director at Pallant House Gallery Chichester. During the lively and informative conversation Sir Peter and Simon were impassioned advocates for the arts and creative industries. Sir Peter

explained that the Arts Council's mission is to ‘Provide great art and culture for everyone.’

Simon said that public funding for the Gallery is dependent on strong educational links. Local schools are using the resources of the gallery rather than going to London. Work with marginalised artists has been hugely successful with the Outsider Arts project receiving critical acclaim.

Government started funding the arts, with general cross party consensus, because it recognised their intrinsic value, believing they are life enhancing, bringing excitement and providing

health benefits and benefitting society generally. The arts contribute to education at all levels and provide economic benefits such as employment in tourism and the creative industries. Urban regeneration is often fuelled by the arts, Gateshead and Liverpool being fine examples. In addition there is no doubt that they enhance the UK's reputation abroad.



photo: Jane Gray

In answering questions, Sir Peter explained that people are increasingly viewing the arts in non-traditional ways. The use of digital media has transformed access. Opera audiences are growing

because it possible to see a live opera streamed to local cinemas. Regional theatre is in relative good health and access to great art is easier now that so much is available online. He stated that the public purse is shrinking so arts organisations must look to other ways of attracting support through more efficient fundraising, commercial enterprise and social involvement. Chris Dawes thanked Sir Peter and Simon for their stimulating contributions. The enjoyable afternoon concluded with tea, delicious cakes and further conversations between the seventy five attendees.

Kate Darwin discovers The Friends know how to throw a good party

The evening sunshine filled St Michael's, painting the marble and alabaster in the sanctuary with rose pink and gold, as we arrived for the annual dinner. Eleven round tables, each for ten, were set in the nave; in the south aisle were a bar and a trio of jazz musicians, establishing the tone for the occasion.

The beautiful setting, the cheerful and appreciative company and the delicious meal all made for a memorable event. The menu was mid-summery: gazpacho, a piquant boeuf d'été with seasonal vegetables, lime mousse cheesecake semifreddo (as good as it sounds!) with masses of sweet juicy strawberries, Sussex Brie and grapes, followed by coffee with superbly dark truffles. The whole meal was served with a friendly competence that some Brighton restaurants could learn from.

There were many thoughtful details, evidence of loving preparation for the occasion: the speeches were brief and informal, the grace witty (we were grateful *not* to be 'about to receive' lo-

custs and honey), rose petals were scattered on the white table cloths, place-cards were elegantly written, candles glowed in pretty glass bowls. The sale of raffle tickets was achieved with daunting efficiency and minimum fuss. As well as offering effective support to St Michael's The Friends certainly know how to throw a good party.



photo: Jane Gray

As the evening ended, there was one final treat: we were asked to look up, and saw a budded cross projected onto the ceiling to illuminate the strips of wood that form its curves (like a particularly fine parquet floor). It revealed what had been previously gone unnoticed: a metaphor for the work of The Friends.

Contact the Friends

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Dates for your diary

Saturday Oct 17th The Annual Lecture
3 pm Dominic Cole
£12 on the door: Friends free
with the famous tea and cakes

In November An Operatic Event
John Cox

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