



the flyer

Down Memory Lane

Since Friends events and fundraising have been on hold recently, we thought a ramble down memory lane might be appropriate for this issue of *The Flyer*. **Alison Minns**

How challenging recent months have been for us all and sadly, covid-19 also meant Friends events and fundraising had to be put on hold.

This is particularly significant since it is just over ten years ago that the Friends of St Michael's was relaunched and it had been hoped that the 2020 Annual Dinner would reflect that achievement and celebrate the large sums raised over the years for the preservation and conservation of the church.

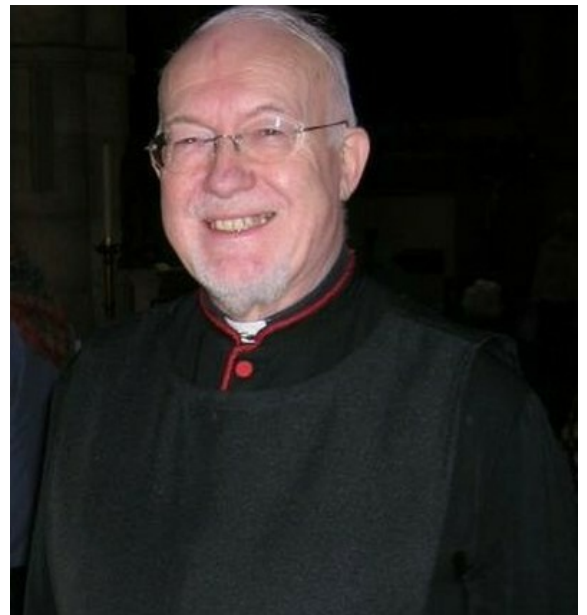
The August 2010 newsletter reads:

Last August a small group of Friends of St Michael's 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 Pritchard 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 gather-

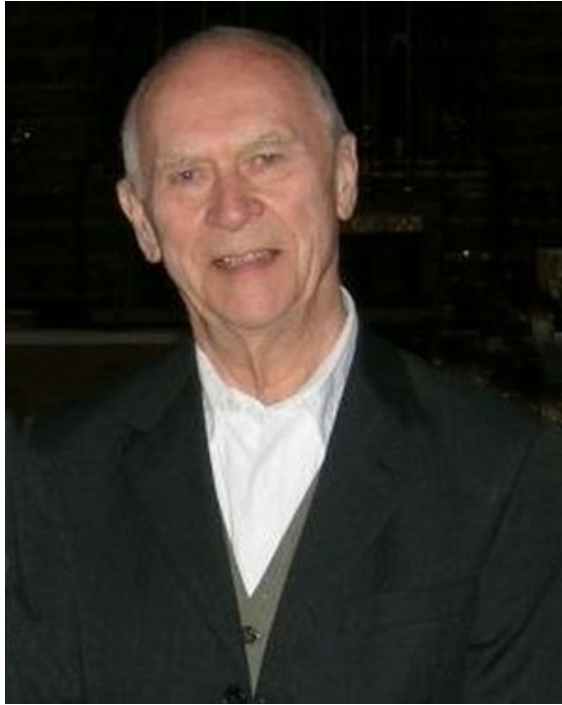
ing. The church looked its very best in the evening sunlight.



Fr. Robert Fayers

On June 25th we held our first major fundraising 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 [Fayers] for letting us use the building in this way. Almost £5,000 was raised from the evening.

Some things have changed: John Cox is no longer our Chair but Jonathan Prichard remains as Vice Chair and Sir Roy Strong is still our Patron. The Fr Robert referred to is Robert Fayers. His successor was the genial Fr Robert Norbury who, as mentioned elsewhere in *The Flyer* has sadly just left us for another post. He and Paula will be much missed.



John Cox

However, thanks to all our indomitable and enterprising volunteers we have continued to run events such as the January Icicles Party and the Annual Dinner. We have run prestigious lectures with speakers such as Sir Roy Strong, Sir Charles Saumarez Smith, Sir Peter Bazalgette, William Nicholson, Ayla Lepine and Maxwell Hutchinson, and have very much enjoyed talks and presentations by local friends who have been generous with their time and expertise. These include David Beevers, Sue Berry, John Cox, Alexandra Loske, Simon Martin and David Robson.

Other events have included literary lunches, jazz and fish and chips suppers, recitals, Indian and Spanish evenings, a fashion show and the ever popular wreath making sessions.

Between them Friends (you) have raised thousands of pounds to conserve the paper murals and restore the glass in the magnificent Pre-Raphaelite west rose windows as well as the purchase of cabinets to display some of the historic vestments.

Further plans for projects that Friends might fund are under discussion.

None of this could have been achieved without the dedication, commitment and expertise of our members. What struck me when I joined the Friends was just how much of a community the organisation was and how so many members were prepared to engage and liaise with speakers, cook meals and bake cakes, produce publicity, staff desks, write articles, take photographs, lay tables, decorate the church, set out seating... and so much more. As founder member Margy Nixon said when interviewed for *The Flyer* in March 2017: 'I've certainly got more out of the Friends than



Jonathan Prichard

I've ever done for them. I've made so many good friends.' Our grateful thanks go to everyone and especially those who have sat on the various committees over the years.

The task of conserving the fabric, fixtures and fittings including the works of art within the church and of promoting the use of the building for cultural and community events continues and is now more vital than ever. The Friends of St Michael's looks forward to another ten years (and more) of fundraising (and fun) activities to raise money for our wonderful church.

Friends launch Zoom talks

Alexandra Loske will give the first Zoom talk on Angelica Kauffman on Friday 20th November.

Angelica Kauffman was one of only two women founders of the Royal Academy. Sir Joshua Reynolds referred to her as 'Miss Angel', while the philosopher Herder described her as 'perhaps the most cultivated woman in the whole of Europe'. This year, there should have been a major exhibition about Kauffman at the Royal Academy. Because of the Covid crisis this had to be cancelled, and the exhibition was extended at its first leg in Düsseldorf, Germany.

In this free ZOOM talk Alexandra will introduce this extraordinary artist and her work and provide a glimpse of the exhibition we sadly missed out on.



FRIENDS OF
ST MICHAEL'S
PATRON: SIR ROY STRONG

Alexandra Loske

Angelica Kauffman 'Miss Angel' comes to Britain



Alexandra at the Duesseldorf exhibition

An illustrated talk on Zoom
Friday 20th November 6.30 pm

Free and open to all Friends of St Michael's
who register in advance with
membership@friendsofsaintmichaels.co.uk

Please register early.
Deadline 12 noon Thursday 19th November



Do You Remember The Legendary Ladies' Flamenco Lunch



Photos Tubbs



A wildly successful event. One of Margy Nixon's many imaginative suggestions.

100 guests waited on by a volunteer group of male members of The Friends.

What began as a fairly staid demonstration of Flamenco finished with guests, and waiters, including Fr. Robert Fayers flamenco dancing in the aisles.



A message from Father Robert Norbury

Many of you will know that I accepted the Bishop's invitation to become vicar of the parish of Durrington and moved from the vicarage in Montpelier Villas early in September. Both Paula and I are sad to leave St Michael's and especially the close association with the Friends of St Michael's but both of us intend to maintain that special link by retaining our membership and joining in as often as we are able.

Writing this note to you all gives me the opportunity to thank you for all you contribute to the Friends in myriad ways, whether attending events, helping in the organisation or just by being members. The community of the Friends has been a wonderful expression of what St Michael's means to the wider area and the preservation or restoration of our gem of a building.



The extraordinary array of speakers, activities, lectures and talks has been an inspiration to us all. Thank you: I hope to be able to join you in the future at one of the activities when these strange days are over. Keep healthy and safe.

Fr Robert Norbury
September 2020

Dr Jon Whiteley

Towards the end of May the Ashmolean Museum announced the death of curator Dr Jon Whiteley.

He joined the Museum in 1976 as Assistant Keeper in the Department of Western Art.

'In a career of 38 years at the Ashmolean he was a dedicated teacher to generations of Oxford students, one of the country's most distinguished art historians and a well-loved colleague and friend to everyone who knew and worked with him.'

He will be remembered by the Friends of Saint Michael's for the 2010 Annual Lecture he gave, with just a handful of slides, on the *Pre-Raphaelites in Oxford*.

But Many in the St Michael's audience remembered him as a child film star notably in *The Spanish Gardener* with Dirk Bogarde.

He had a distinguished career in films, gaining an Oscar for his part in *Kidnapped* before leaving stardom behind to pursue his equally distinguished academic career.

