



the flyer

Restoration projects supported by The Friends in 2021

In 2021, at the request of the Parochial Church Council, The Friends funded two restoration projects and part funded a third

In January, The Friends provided £582 for the restoration of the chandelier over the font in the Bodley church. Tom Cosgrove, church warden, gave a full account of the restoration in the August edition of the Flyer.

A grant of £700 in June enabled the PCC to restore the sanctuary lamps in the Bodley and Burges churches. *Tom Cosgrove gives details on page 2 below.*

The floor in the church hall, so vital to many of our events and the wider community, needed to be replaced. Work took place in the late summer financed by the PCC with a contribution of £850 from The Friends.



Photo: Cosgrove

The chandelier over the Bodley font



One of the ways the Friends of St Michael's marks the turn of the year is by holding a social event in January – *The Icicles Party*.

This year, with current covid guidelines, we intend to go ahead.

6.30pm – 8.30pm in the old church (Bodley Church) on Friday 28 January

Join us if you can and feel able.

This is an event for Friends plus their guests
mulled wine, canapés

£5 Pay at the door - cash, card or cheque

Those attending are asked to take a lift on the day before joining us to protect all.

Restoration of the Sanctuary lamp

Tom Cosgrove

Churchwarden and member of The Friends

I thought you might like to learn of the project undertaken to restore, repair, and clean the sanctuary lamps before the high altar, and the altar of the Bodley church. This project followed closely on the chandelier project, funded by Friends.

Sanctuary lamps are placed before the altar to indicate, in the case of the single lamp in the Bodley chapel the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in the aumbry on the altar, and to denote the holiness of the space around the high altar in the Burges church.

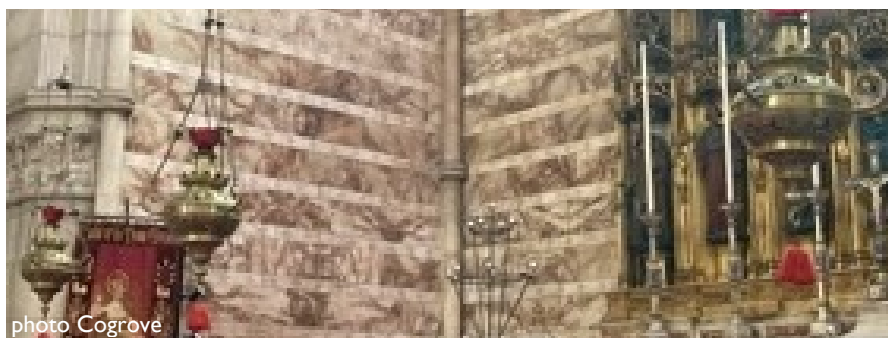
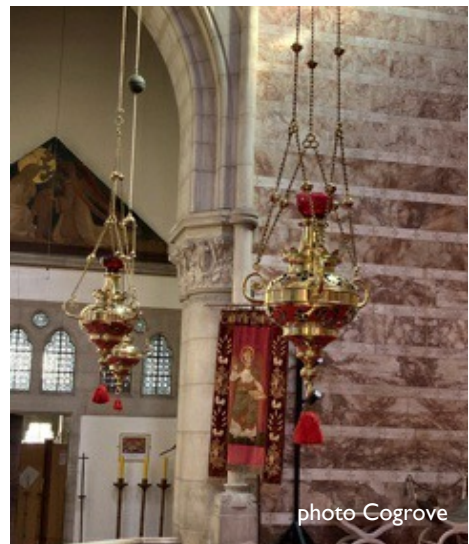
The older single lamp in the Bodley church is of continental manufacture, made in the eighteenth century. Those in the Burges church are late Victorian and were probably placed there when the sanctuary was re-ordered around 1900 as they don't appear in earlier photos.

All the lamps were in a distressed state. After careful inspection, it was determined that the three Victorian lamps did not require more than a thorough deep clean. However, the older single lamp was very black. Significant damage was more visible once the tarnish and accretions were removed. Quite a lot of work was required to get the barley twist suspension elements in a fit state to safely rehang the lamp.

The restoration has really brought out the beauty of the lamps as will be seen in the photographs showing their before and after state.

The work was undertaken by the specialist restorers Mills Antique Metal Restoration who are based in Olive Road in Hove. It is difficult to find artisans with multi skills on site for repair, fabrication of missing parts and so on; it is also good to be able to use a local company.

Mills Restoration do excellent work, cleaning and repair of fire irons, and other domestic metal items should members want to use their services.



New Membership Secretary: David Sears

A socially distanced conversation with Alison Minns

You are a relative newcomer to the Friends; how did you become involved?

Like so many things these days, by happenstance. We had moved to Hove nearly 20 years ago, in theory for a quiet retirement. Instead, I ended up commuting to Brussels most weeks, so anything mid-week was out of the question. The fact that the Friends tended to meet on Friday evenings, with good talks and/or social events, usually both, was therefore very attractive.

My wife, Coreen was already involved in helping behind the scenes or on the front desk, and I was able to take some photos for the newsletter.

This all changed at the start of 2020 when the UK left the EU - and a few weeks later we all went into lockdown.

I was used to listening to long discussions on EU legislation, with interpretation from all the different languages being spoken, which meant wearing headphones and staring at screens - and trying, with the help of a neighbour from Austria, to stay awake! So, when meetings on Zoom became possible, and we could listen at home to wonderfully illustrated lectures on art, architecture, travel, and local and family history, this seemed a great improvement.

I was happy to help the Friends run their own meetings, with the help of the church Zoom account, and it was good to see and talk to all our own friends before and after each session.

Later on, when my predecessor Sarah Allison said that she would like to stand down as Membership Secretary, I somehow ended up volunteering (or being volunteered, very gently, perhaps?) - and the rest, as they say, is history.

What does the Membership Secretary do?

As ever, it means keeping up-to-date contact details for all our members - Honorary, Life and Annual (Single or Joint) - and making sure that



Photo Sears

everyone gets their own copies of the newsletters and news of upcoming events by e-mail or hard copy.

I have always enjoyed building databases as a sort of electronic basket-making (and to help a fading memory!) and, especially with a membership list, it's always fun when you can put faces to the names.

I also have to remind Annual members who do not pay by standing order that their subscriptions become due at the start of the year - so I hope I do not lose too many Friends or friends in the process!

What have you learnt about the Friends since you joined?

Certainly, just how hard some people work to keep all the shows on the road - and how enjoyable the events are when they happen. There's nowhere else in Brighton or Hove that I know where you can get such a pleasant mixture in such remarkable surroundings.

One aim of the Friends is to 'promote the use of the building (of St Michael's) for cultural and community events'; they do this handsomely - and that is why we all stay involved.

I certainly wish the Friends well in 2022 - and look forward to meeting everyone wherever and however we can in the coming months. Let's hope it will be a little more 'normal' than last year!

The December wreath-making workshops

Alison Minns editor

Below is my account of the workshop I attended together with reports on two of the other three sessions run so expertly by Simon Thompson in December. Strange how all accounts mention prosecco... I will refrain from mentioning just how many empty bottles from the previous day's session were found under the tables on the day I attended.

The Friday afternoon workshop

It's disturbingly easy to mistype 'wreathmaking' as 'wrathmaking' but nothing could be further from the truth.

No twinkling battery lights, no dried orange slices, no sparkling pinecones, no brilliant baubles, no red ribbons, no gold adornments, no glitter berries...

There were four of us making Christmas wreaths (and one observer – sadly unable to do any hands on due to a recent hand operation) at the session



I attended and we all opted for the natural look. Our gifted tutor, Simon Thompson had sourced all of the above but we were seduced by the splendid assortment of fresh greenery

and natural festive branches. The English eucalyptus was popular as was the crimson skimmia.



We diligently moulded our moss, wove our wires and spritzed our sprays.

This is the seventh year I have attended a Friends of St Michael's wreathmaking session and every year I am astonished at the variety (and beauty) of everyone's creations. Put it down to Simon's expert guidance, the spirit of support amongst the group or perhaps the prosecco... whatever the cause, I felt all the participants could be justly proud of the wreath they had produced.

Front doors in Brighton and Hove will look a lot more festive this Christmas.

The Saturday morning workshop

Coreen Sears

It is a truth universally acknowledged that every household at Christmas must be in want of a wreath. Well, Jane Austen might not have said precisely that, but it is certainly true that members of the Friends of St Michael's sign up to Simon's wreath-making sessions in ever greater numbers.



photo C Sears

An especial joy for me as someone who loves working with flowers and making decorations for the festivals of the year is the provision of the abundance of foliage and other decorative items all sourced by Simon at a wholesale florist. I can't think of any other circumstance when I have access to such plenty and variety.



photo C Sears

If we are honest, it is not just the need for a wreath that draws us to these occasions: it is the convivial and engaging atmosphere that Simon creates, along with the coffee, the mince pies and the glasses of prosecco. For we regulars Simon's sessions are a significant moment in the approach to Christmas.

So, thanks to the Friends of St Michael's for promoting these totally enjoyable get togethers, and above all, multiple thanks to Simon for his generosity in contributing his time, his expertise and his teaching skills to provide us with such happy occasions.

The Saturday afternoon workshop Jill Spruzen

I am a new friend of St Michael's, along with my husband - Simon (different to the one mentioned below). We are so lucky to be able to see the beautiful church from our house, so I was very excited to join the wreathmaking course on the 11th December.

Under Simon's expert guidance, and with lots of laughter, prosecco and mince pies, and a few Christmas songs, I think we all turned out some amazing wreaths, which will be adorning our doors. Simon made it seem easy and fun, and my fellow wreathmakers were great company.



photo Neilson

If you have not tried this event, do try. It is so-cial, fun and nice to use our beautiful church, and hopefully will contribute to its continued thriving future. I'll definitely be back next year.

Wishing you all a Peaceful & Thriving 2022.

Jazz on an autumn evening

Mick Hartney

An evening in early autumn, cool but not yet chilly. People more relaxed about going out, mixing and enjoying life. What better than an evening of food, drink, conversation and live music? Around forty Friends (and friends of Friends) gathered in the Bodley Chapel on Friday 24 September to enjoy some jazz, wine and cheese, and the company of friends.

The Chapel was thoughtfully lit with small lights, simulating candlelight but with more safety – one could almost forget the vastness of the surrounding architecture. Parts of the grey marble font and the green serpentine pulpit were visible: the remainder disappeared into the shadows.

A light buffet of cheese and nibbles with wine was enjoyed in the interval between the two sets but I'll attend first and mainly to the music, provided by a trio of piano (Mark Edwards), double bass (Nigel Thomas) and guitar (James Osler). Two questions I am frequently asked by non-jazz fans leave me slightly stuck for an answer. The first is: what kind of jazz is this? Rather than go through the complicated menu available, I can only reply: it's either good or not so good. This evening's offering was definitely in the former category. The second is: would it help if I followed just one instrument? My reply: do that if it helps, but you'll miss out on the delicious interplay of musicians responding to each other in the present moment.

Mark Edwards is a local musician with a prodigious curriculum vitae as a live and recording artist, heading various kinds and sizes of ensembles, a session player and producer in numerous genres, with musicians as diverse as Aztec Camera, Bobby Wellins, Herbie Flowers, Carleen Anderson, and many, many others. Mark is also a devout Christian who likes playing in churches, the way the specific acoustics, most suitable



photo Tubbs

for choral works, spread the sound and render it spacious.

Nigel Thomas has a similarly impressive CV as a double bass player, composer and band leader, playing with Mark in the Nigel Thomas Quintet and with a wide range of other jazz musicians including Clare Martin, Bobby Wellins and Byron Wallen.

The third and youngest member of the trio was James Osler, guitarist, composer and former member of Mark Edwards' ensemble, *Cloggz*, performing, according to the band's Facebook page, 'Beautiful, melodic, romantic and cinematic music from all around the world'. Another local musician, James's compositions can also be heard in the work of *Pillow*, an unconventional string quartet which includes James on guitar. James is also the son of Jane Osler, Friends committee member, and performed in the church with his own trio back in 2015.

The playlist was unusually eclectic, from tunes by two of the greats of bop standards – Sonny Rollins' calypso-infused *St Thomas*, which had the audience, if not dancing, at least tapping their feet, and Thelonious Monk's eerie *Misterioso* – to ballads, film themes and even a Malian guitar piece. Monk's tune never seemed so



photo Tubbs

much like a stripped-down and stretched-out 12-bar blues. The Monk-influenced tenor sax player, Tony Kofi, with whom both Edwards and Thomas have played, approaches this tune like a peal of bells. Edwards sensibly maintained a steady tempo, allowing the sheer strangeness of the theme to assert itself.

If I Should Lose You, by Leo Robin and Ralph Rainger, was free of the political overtones vested in it by Gilad Atzmon. *Chelsea Bridge*, an impressionistic composition by Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn sparkled brilliantly, as always: briefly, the music and the space in which it resounded became as one, in a highlight of the programme.

The film themes were both by Henry Mancini, and originally had words by Johnny Mercer. *Moon River* was stripped of the sentimental lyrics and the sweet performance in the film *Breakfast at Tiffany's* by Audrey Hepburn (she rightly refused to have her singing voice



dubbed). The other, superior Mancini tune, *Days of Wine and Roses*, from the film of the same name, gave Edwards the opportunity, in a virtuoso moment, to scatter the notes of the melody, to examine and redefine them, before restating the theme with poignant simplicity.

Our thanks are due to the Friends who organised the date, the lighting and the refreshments, which came together with the music to make a night to remember for a long time.

An Italian evening

Corinne Attwood

The Friends of St. Michael's Italian Evening was held in the church hall on Friday 26th November. It was a full house, and what a treat it was to be able to gather together in close proximity, unmasked, at the end of a second year of intermittent legal restrictions on our movements and socialising.

First we enjoyed mingling and catching up on news with friends and neighbours we had not been able to meet for some time. We then sat down at tables which had been beautifully laid in festive Italian fashion with red tablecloths, decorations and candles. Olives and breadsticks had been put out for starters.

The volunteer chef and helpers had prepared a great quantity of Italian hunter's stew of beef and potatoes, with accompanying vegetables. To finish there was a delicious creamy dessert, with enough for seconds. To accompany the hearty meal, a variety of bottles of red and white wine



were on sale. The wine flowed and added to the convivial atmosphere in the warm and cosy church hall, with lighthearted music playing in the background.

All too soon the evening drew to a close, and the chef (Simon Thompson) emerged still wearing his 'naughty' apron to receive praise and fulsome thanks for his efforts. We departed at 10pm after a very pleasant evening, in fervent hopes that this would not be the last such social occasion for many months to come.

With thanks to Simon and all who helped to organise the event.