



the flyer

Forthcoming Events

- 13th June An illustrated talk at 6.30pm
David Robson *Denman and the Ditchling Group*
- 8th August The Literary Lunch
Ainsley Hepburn *In the Footsteps of the Holocaust*
- 27th Sept An illustrated talk
Nick Sturt *Strictly Sussex wild flowers*
- Early May Under consideration *A Chinese Evening*
- And later As usual *Wreath making in December*
Icicles in the new year

Friends Festive Wreathmaking with Simon

Last December as usual, Simon Thompson came up trumps and ran several Christmas wreathmaking sessions, complete with mince pies and prosecco.

The wreaths were spectacular, colourful, imaginative and personal. Festive fun was had by all.

Thanks to Simon for sourcing the flowers and foliage, the tools and implements, the edibles and drinkables and for remaining cheerful and relatively sane throughout.



On finding warmth of friendship at the Icicles

Angela Devas

Prayers were answered or we were lucky with the weather depending on your persuasion...but storm Éowyn kindly stayed away. The beautiful lanterns guiding us up the steps into the main nave of St Michael's shone undisturbed. The church was charmingly lit by strings of fairy lights illuminating the gently shivering guests below, warming themselves with the excellent and copious mulled wine.

As the night progressed, the mulled wine and the camaraderie of friends and neighbours made the cold outside feel worlds away. Guests mingled, wrapped in scarves and smiles, sharing stories and making new memories in the glow of the festive lights. The Icicles Party, once again, proved to be a beacon of cheer, a testament to the enduring spirit of community and joy in the heart of winter. The Icicles Party is such a mid-winter treat; a celebration in the darkest days of January, with Christmas far behind and the days so short. Of course none of this could have happened without the dedicated team of helpers who organise everything so smoothly behind the scenes. Newsletters were written and sent out, decorations assembled, canapés were made and crises averted all before the guests arrived. Once we arrived, glasses were filled and the bar was excellently tended, all while the Friends caught up with each other. Reminiscences abounded and news was happily exchanged. When we all left into an even colder night those helpers stayed on to stack chairs, remove crumbs and extinguish the candlelit lanterns. Many thanks to all these volunteers with all their seen and unseen labours.



Brian Ogilvie at The Fish and Chip Supper

Vanishing Voices - The Story of Brighton's Lost Fishing Community

Mary Weaver

It was cold outside but that didn't deter 60 Friends from turning up to enjoy an amusing and informative talk by Brian Ogilvie from Brighton's Fishing Museum. A welcoming glass of prosecco followed by a delicious fish and chips supper set the tone for the evening where Friends gathered along beautifully decorated sea-themed tables.

Brian began his talk by admitting that he was 'the worst fisherman in the world' but this hasn't affected his fascination and support for the museum over the years. He told us that Brighton first became known as a fishing town more than 1000 years ago when the growing population of 3-4000 people needed feeding, and the sea was teeming with fish. It became an important part of the local economy, peaking in 1580 with 80 boats, 400 marines and 1000 nets. The industry remained prosperous until the great storms of 1703 and 1705 brought the loss of houses, windmills and boats and heralded its decline along with Brighton in general. The town recovered and over the years became a fashionable resort but fishing continued to diminish and although it still exists today it's no longer a primary industry.

Brian's fascinating talk included a mini sing-song and a jokey quiz where one lucky Friend won a jar of his wife's legendary whiskey marmalade. He received a bottle of wine as thanks and a promise that there would very likely be a stream of fascinated Friends visiting the Fishing Museum in the near future.

***Footnote:** Brighton's Fishing Museum, in two arches west of the Palace Pier, in King's Road, is free to enter and open most days.*

David Beevers tour of St Michael's

Mike Ray

On 22 September a group of Friends were treated to a tour of our church which is featured as the best Sussex church in Simon Jenkins's book, *England's Thousand Best Churches*. It was led by David Beevers who served the city for many years as Keeper of Preston Manor, of Fine Art and the Royal Pavilion. In addition, he has written a number of books including the guidebook to the church. His enthusiasm for the building was manifest.

David explained how the mighty church was funded and built by rich residents encouraged by the vicar, Charles Beanlands in 1860-61. The original church was the work of G F Bodley, one of the greatest Victorian church architects whose father was a doctor in Brighton. However, just a few years later, it needed to be extended although the work was delayed until 1893. The new architect was William Burges, later famous for his work at Cardiff castle and Castell Coch. Bodley was influenced by an Italianate Gothic style whereas Burges was very much a thirteenth century man in thrall to French Gothic.

The glory of the church is its stained glass which involved all the great designers of glass of the time: Burne-Jones, Morris, Webb and Rossetti. David told us about each group of windows, their subjects, designs and the colours of the glass used. Later work was commissioned from C E Kempe, a relative of Thomas Kemp of Kemptown.

In the Burges church we saw the choir stall misericords and carved capitals, two of which were associated with memories of the Indian Mutiny.

We finished with being shown the two Burges-designed chalices not normally on view. They incorporated jewels and semi-precious stones given by lady parishioners.

Before we left we were given a fine tea which rounded off a very pleasant afternoon.

St Michael's: a Victorian perspective

David Beevers

The article below is the continuation of an extract from the Brighton Gazette, 17 October 1874, the first part of which we reprinted in the August 2024 Flyer. The Gazette was broadly in favour of Brighton High Churchmanship, unlike its rival, the Brighton Herald. In the 1870s it ran a series of anonymous articles on Brighton churches which are now fascinating to read. The articles cover architecture and fittings, though never in enough detail, as well as interesting descriptions of services and parish life. Needless to say, as the article was published in 1874, it only covers the 'old' church by G.F. Bodley; William Burges's cathedral-like additions had not yet been built.'



We must proceed with the immediate object of the present article, which is to give such a necessarily brief, and at the same time complete description of the church and its adornments, as will enable those who worship in it to recognize their favourite church in the picture presented to their notice, and to give those who have never been inside a fair and honest idea of it.

The situation of S. Michael's is pretty well known to be one of the best in the town, for architectural effect. At the top of Montpelier Road, in St. Michael's Place, it stands, rising finely upon the hill whereon it rests, and a notable attraction for the many frequenters of this pleasant neighbourhood.

But things in that district are not now what they were a dozen years ago, when the church was opened, and it was described as being situated in a field opposite the Temple. That field has shared the fate of many others during the period of time which has elapsed since then, and now there is nothing but houses and streets, and S. Michael's has a large population close up to its very doors to fill its sacred precincts. But in other things there have been changes since that time, and instead of one of the principal characteristics of S. Michael's being its unusual height, we find it shrinks into comparative littleness when compared with the lofty monument of the Rev. A. D. Wagner's Christian munificence, which rears its proud head in the London Road.

In style S. Michael's may be described as a sort of improved pointed Italian. It comprises a nave, chancel, and two aisles. The nave and chancel are both of the same height, which is 66ft, and are divided by a single bell-cote of timber, which is topped by a leaden spire, pyramidal in form, and containing a Russian bell brought from Sebastapol by Captain Moorsom, and by his family presented to the church. The chancel is distinguished from the nave by having a richer cresting and a carved cornice, which its clerestory windows of two lights, under large sexfoiled circles, also display more magnificence in their design than the corresponding windows in the nave. The aisles are lower than the proportions of the nave would seem to warrant, but this is part of the design of the building, and has enabled the architect to give to the clerestory large proportions compared with the chancel and nave.

The materials used in the erection of the church are red bricks, on which excellent decorative effects have been produced by decorations of bands of white stone, inlayings of brick carvings, coloured tiles, chalk, and gives one the idea of a good substantial church, in the erection of which the best principles of ecclesiastical architecture have been carefully borne in mind.