

## ***Dates for 2019: please note them in your diary NOW!***

**On THURSDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2019, at 7.00pm** in the church, local historian James Wisdom, Chairman of the Brentford and Chiswick Local History Society, will give a talk entitled 'A Victorian Naturalist on the Thames: Charles Cornish of Chiswick Mall'. Charles Cornish was a prolific late-Victorian journalist, writing mainly about the natural world. He married into the Thornycroft family and lived at Chiswick Mall. His handsome illustrated book, *The Naturalist on the Thames*, is so valuable to us today as it shows us the river – its fish, its eyots and its fishermen – through expert local eyes. But Cornish also maintained an intriguing parallel life.

**On FRIDAY 29 MARCH 2019 at 3.00pm** twenty places on a guided tour of the Supreme Court, on Westminster Square, have been booked for Friends of St Nicholas Church. After the tour, which lasts for about one hour, we propose to have tea together in the Supreme Court's café. The cost of this tour, including tea, will be £15.00 per head. Numbers are limited, so if you would like to join the group, please be in touch with Francis Ames-Lewis, at [f.ames-lewis@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:f.ames-lewis@bbk.ac.uk), or on (020) 8748 1259 as soon as possible.

**On SUNDAY 12 MAY 2019, at 7.00pm** in the church, following Choral Evensong at 6.00pm, all are welcome to the Friends' Annual Reception and AGM. After the AGM David Cresswell will give a brief demonstration of the range and diversity of the refurbished and reconfigured pipe organ.

**On THURSDAY 4 JULY at 2.00pm** sixteen places have been booked on a double guided tour of the William Morris Society display at Kelmscott House on Hammersmith Mall, and of the typographer Emery Walker's house at 7 Hammersmith Terrace. Due to constraints of space especially at the latter venue, two groups of maximum eight Friends each will tour the two venues in parallel, starting at 2.00pm and at 3.30pm; all will meet at the William Morris Society for tea or coffee at 3.15pm, and we hope also to provide tea after the tours, at around 4.45pm. The cost of this double tour, including tea or coffee at the midpoint, will be £25.00. As numbers are limited, please be in touch with Francis Ames-Lewis, at [f.ames-lewis@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:f.ames-lewis@bbk.ac.uk), or on (020) 8748 1259 as soon as possible if you would like to join the group

**On Saturday 28 September 2019 at 2.00pm** the Friends are to hold an Auction of works of art, in aid of the next phase of the church's Development Project, the restoration of the external stonework. The Auction will be conducted by Adrian Biddell, to whom we are deeply grateful, and will be preceded by a viewing session on Friday 27

September. Further details will be circulated in the July 2019 issue of this Newsletter.

On the evening of **Friday 1 November** 2019 in the church, the jazz band Rebel Yell, who gave a splendid concert in 2017, will perform for us once again. Further details of this event will be circulated in the next issue of this Newsletter, but we hope that you will make a note of it in your diary now.

## ***Financial position, and recent and future projects***

On 10 September 2018 the balance in the Friends' bank accounts stood at £32,969. But we agreed that we should not for the time being take on any major new funding commitments, aside from the installation of metal grilles across the window openings in the tower, until it becomes clear what contribution we should make to the next phase of the church's Development Project, the restoration of the external stonework.

Two small projects that we have in hand are the installation, perhaps close to the baptistery, of a framed board listing the projects funded wholly or in part by the Friends since 2005; and of arrangements to allow the splendid eagle lectern to be brought back into regular use.

Application has gone forward to the Diocesan Advisory Committee for a Faculty to allow the plaque in memory of Jim Barron, acknowledging the contribution of his bequest to the costs of the recent refurbishment of the organ, to be mounted on the wall to the left of the pulpit.

The 2018 Friends of St Nicholas Church Christmas cards, designed by Donald Maxwell, showing some of the decorative stars that feature in the church's late Victorian stained-glass windows, were well received and the entire print-run was sold out after a few weeks. Max has also designed for us the Friends' new logo, used for the first time on the front of this issue of the Newsletter. This is based on the roundel window in the vestry which was until recently entirely obscured from view within the church.

## ***Friends' events, Summer to Autumn 2018***

1. On 11 July 2018 the local artist Ben Johnson talked about his work and his artistic principles. Most important in his Alhambra series is the underlying structure of the exterior and interior spaces that he defines. This geometrical basis is the fundamental foundation of his works: the rich Moorish decoration is superimposed 'light entertainment'. Hence perspective, as defined in the Italian Renaissance, is essential. This series is based on photographs he took 40 years ago. Ben's passion for geometry drove his choices of subject matter, and led to his use of computer-generated models of architectonic forms. Hence the importance

in his work of cityscapes such as his vista of Jerusalem. Producing this work involved the use of machine cut stencils for the first time. The cityscape of Liverpool required months of drawing, followed by completion in public for the last six weeks' work: 52,000 visitors watched him at work, and 200,000 then visited the final work on view in the Walker Art Gallery. This has brought the people of Liverpool together, especially those who had never previously visited an art gallery.

2. On 8 September 2018 Malcolm Smith once again conducted a group of some 25 around the Old Chiswick Burial Ground.

3. On 31 October a group of Friends went on a guided tour of Freemasons' Hall in Covent Garden, the principal focus of the activities of the masons in the UK. The building, which dates from the early 1930s, is magnificently enriched internally with stained-glass windows, mosaics, and murals all in the finest materials. Our guide introduced us to some of the major ideas behind the Masonic symbolism to be observed throughout the grand interiors. This visit prompted considerable discussion over tea and cakes at Patisserie Valerie close by the Hall.

4. On 29 November, the well-known lecturer and art historian Jo Walton gave an illustrated talk on 'Eric Ravilious: Painter of the Everyday'. The talk opened with Ravilious' celebrated view of Chiswick Eyot from the front bedroom of one of the Mall houses (Thamescote has been proposed, or perhaps Cygnet House). The speaker stressed the importance of the painter's unique watercolour technique in achieving visually lively textural effects. Ravilious had a quirky imagination in his use of everyday, incongruous objects to add spice to his scenes, often including some form of transport (bicycles, steam trains, gypsy caravans...) which make the viewer look at things afresh. Ravilious was also a skilled wood-engraver, and a designer of posters, or for ceramics.

#### ***The Friends of St Nicholas Church***

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# Newsletter 27 January 2019

Edited by Francis Ames-Lewis