

THE FRIENDS OF ST NICHOLAS CHURCH

Registered charity no. 291262

Newsletter 1 : January 2006

Editor: Francis Ames-Lewis

The Friends of St Nicholas Church re-launched

As you will probably know, the Friends of St Nicholas Church was re-launched at a Reception held in the church after Choral Evensong on Sunday, 25 September 2005. A brief Annual General Meeting elected a new Management Committee, the membership of which is given on the last page of this Newsletter. The evening was judged a complete success, and thanks go especially to all Friends and others who provided excellent canapés.

Membership and financial position

At the time of writing, membership of the Friends numbers 57 households. The Management Committee regards this as a healthy start, although we are obviously eager to attract more members of the congregation and the local community to join the Friends. Work on recruitment of more members, both individuals and local businesses, continues and will continue. We are also hoping to attract sponsorship for forthcoming events from local businesses, and if any Friends have contacts, or suggestions as to whom we might approach, we would be very glad to hear from you. New members have contributed over £3,000 to the funds that are available to support work on the fabric of the church and the churchyard. Although some of these are relatively large one-off contributions, we are hoping that we will build up towards an annual income that can make some considerable contribution towards the funds needed for future work on the church fabric.

Projects for which Friends' funds could be invited

Cleaning and restoration of the North Porch, to make entrance to the church more welcoming, is under way. The principal urgent project is the internal lighting of the church, including the need for re-wiring. The Friends may be invited to contribute funds to one particular part of this costly project. Funds may also be needed to complement the Heritage Lottery Fund grant towards the regeneration of the churchyard. There is no shortage of work on the fabric of the church to which the Friends may be asked to contribute. The major project for the installation of kitchen and toilet facilities in the corner between the south porch and the tower is currently taking a back seat, given the other pressures on the church's capital funds.

Forthcoming Friends' events

1. A tour of the College of Arms

Clive Cheesman, a Friend and member of the St Nicholas congregation, is Rouge Dragon Herald at the College of Arms. He has offered to conduct an evening tour round the College exclusively for the Friends. The tour will take in the three principal rooms of the College: the Earl Marshal's Court (where the High Court of Chivalry sits); the Waiting Room; and the Record Room. Friends will be shown heraldic and genealogical manuscripts dating from every century of the College's history, including the present one, and Clive will explain something of the corporate structure, function and workings of the College, as well

as the architectural history of the building. He will hope to take out a few manuscripts that relate in some way to Chiswick, to Chiswick families and specifically to tombs in the church on which heraldry can be seen – most notably, obviously, the Chaloner monument.

The tour of the College of Arms will take place on the evening of ... 8/9 February 2006, starting at 6.30 pm, and it will be followed by refreshments until around 9.00 pm. Friends will be asked to pay £20.00 each, to cover the costs of late opening of the College and the refreshments, and to provide a modest income towards the Friends' objectives. Numbers will be limited to 20 participants, so please let me know as soon as possible if you wish to join the tour. If numbers greatly exceed 20, it should be possible to arrange for a second tour at a later date.

2. A concert by the St Peter's Singers

The St Peter's Singers, a chamber choir numbering some 30 singers based at St Peter's Church, Hammersmith, will give a concert in St Nicholas Church on Saturday 18 March 2006 at 7.30 pm. The programme will principally consist of Haydn's *St Nicholas Mass* and the Duruflé *Requiem*. If as Friends you would like to join us for this concert, complimentary tickets, two per Friend-household, can be obtained on application to me. Please let me know as soon as possible if you would like tickets, and I will arrange for them to be sent to you in good time.

3. Annual General Meeting and Reception

A brief Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday 7 May 2006, during a Reception for Friends of St Nicholas Church that will follow the annual Choral Evensong to commemorate the Benefactors of the church. Further details of this will be circulated in due course, but I would be grateful if you could note the date in your diaries.

4. Future plans

We are arranging for a lecture on the history and architecture of the church to be given in Autumn 2006 by Professor Anthony Quiney, an architectural historian who has written the definitive monograph on J.L. Pearson, the architect of the main part of the church, rebuilt in the early 1880s. We also propose to host a concert to be given by Chiswick Baroque, a local *a cappella* group of five voices who sing baroque and contemporary songs, negro spirituals and other music in richly varied programmes. Discussion of the possibility of holding an art auction on behalf of the Friends is also in train. Further news of these and other future events will be circulated in the second issue of this *Newsletter*. In the meantime, if any Friends have suggestions of events of any sort that they might be able to help us to put on, or in which they would like to participate, we are always eager to hear from you.

Stop Press. Friends may be interested to know that Francis Ames-Lewis will give a talk on 'Chiswick Parish Church: past, present and future' to the Brentford & Chiswick Local History Society at 7.30 pm on 20 March 2006, at the Chiswick Memorial Club, Afton Memorial House, Bourne Place, Chiswick W4. This will provide an opportunity to publicise the work of the Friends more widely within the local community.

The Friends' Management Committee

Chairman and Editor of the *Newsletter*: Francis Ames-Lewis, 52 Prebend Gardens, London W6.0XU; tel/fax: (020) 8748 1259; email: f.ames-lewis@bbk.ac.uk

Secretary: Christabel Ames-Lewis

Treasurer: Malcolm Smith

Membership Secretary: Richard Ellis; Committee: Ann Frye, Mark Hodson

Ex-officio Trustees: Revd Patrick Tuft, Francis Kinghorn, Don Maxwell