

# THE FRIENDS OF ST NICHOLAS CHURCH

Registered charity no. 291262

## *Newsletter 3 : January 2007*

Editor: Francis Ames-Lewis

### **Membership and financial position**

Membership of the Friends of St Nicholas Church currently stands at some 80 households, and a total of some 120 individuals. This provides a good foundation on which we can build both our work for the church and a continuing increase in membership. We are eager to attract more members of the congregation and the local community to join the Friends, corporate members from local businesses and other organisations, and further sponsorship for forthcoming events. Please let me know if you have any ideas about fund-raising for the Friends.

At the end of calendar year 2006 funds in our bank accounts amount to nearly £13,000. This is made up of around £9,000 in subscriptions and other donations since our re-launch in September 2005; some £840 recouped from Inland Revenue from Gift-Aided donations (which shows how valuable gift-aiding is to us, so please do gift-aid your subscription if you can); and some £700 raised from Friends' events. The Management Committee has decided that to avoid further confusion, the minimum subscriptions to the Friends for 2007 will be £25.00 for an individual, and £40.00 for a household to allow free admission for two to Friends' events held in the church. We are also encouraging more Friends to pay their donations by Standing Order. 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. We do hope therefore that you will seize this opportunity to send in your subscription for 2007.

### **Projects for which Friends' funds could be invited**

Now that the consultation phase on the church lighting project is drawing to a close, we are expecting to hear early in the New Year what parts of the work we will be invited to fund. Land Use Consultants' report on the churchyard restoration project is all but complete, so the phase 2 HLF application will be submitted sometime next year. We should hear during the year if we may contribute to the necessary match funding for this major project.

### **Friends' events, Autumn 2006**

#### **1. *John Loughborough Pearson and St Nicholas, Chiswick***

A lecture entitled 'John Loughborough Pearson and St Nicholas, Chiswick' was given in the church on Thursday 12 October 2006 at 7.00 pm, by Professor Anthony Quiney, the premier authority on J.L. Pearson, the architect of the main part of the church, rebuilt in the early 1880s. Professor Quiney first outlined the early years of Pearson's career in Yorkshire and elsewhere while he developed his network of patrons and clients. Citing, and illustrating, the example of major buildings, he showed how by 1880, when the St Nicholas rebuilding project began to get underway, Pearson had established himself as one of the most popular

neo-Gothic architects practising in the UK. The design and rebuilding of St Nicholas Chiswick coincided in Pearson's work with his masterpiece, Truro Cathedral. Professor Quiney demonstrated how features of St Nicholas Church, especially the 'authentic' reuse of the later Gothic Perpendicular style for the tracery in the aisle windows, echo the style of Truro. This contrasts with the use of Decorated Gothic by William Burges for the great East Window in the chancel, which was designed and installed around 1860. At that time, Professor Quiney observed, Decorated was considered the purest, most 'moral' Gothic style; but by the early 1880s Perpendicular was more standard, not least in Pearson's architectural language. Professor Quiney made lively responses to a number of questions lobbed at him by members of his audience, and continued discussion of J.L. Pearson and his architecture over a glass of wine at the Reception that followed his lecture.

## **2. A visit to the National Gallery**

I was very pleased to arrange a visit to the National Gallery on the evening of Wednesday 13 December 2006. A group of some 20 Friends and others looked at, and talked with me about, a series of paintings of the *Nativity of Christ* and the *Adoration of the Magi*. Unfortunately, due to industrial action on the part of warders at the National Gallery, a good many rooms were closed that evening. However, we held interesting discussion around a varied group of paintings of the 16th and 17th centuries. To judge by comments made after the event, and by the level of donations made to Friends' funds, this is an exercise to be repeated. Let us hope that next Christmas the Sainsbury Wing rooms will be accessible to us, and that we can then look at how the *Nativity* and the *Adoration* were represented in late Medieval and early Renaissance paintings.

## **Future plans in Spring 2007, and other news**

A lecture entitled 'William Hogarth and Chiswick' will be given in the church on Thursday 15 March 2007 at 7.00 pm. The lecturer will be Emeritus Professor William Vaughan, formerly Pevsner Professor of the History of Art at Birkbeck College, University of London. Will Vaughan is a leading international specialist on the history of British painting of the 18th and 19th centuries. He has written several definitive studies of English painters, and has curated several exhibitions, including that on Samuel Palmer at the British Museum in 2005. His lecture on 15 March is scheduled to coincide with the major Hogarth exhibition that will be on display at Tate Britain from 7 February until 29 April 2007. Refreshments will be available after the lecture, which is free for Friends.

I will be very happy to lead a second visit to the National Gallery, to talk with Friends about paintings of the *Annunciation*, at 7.00 pm on the Wednesday after Lady Day, 28 March 2007. Please let me know as soon as possible if you'd like to be included in this visit.

The AGM and Reception for the Friends of St Nicholas Church will be held at 7.00 pm on Sunday 13 May, after the Choral Evensong to commemorate the Benefactors of the church at 6.00 pm that evening. Please note this date now in your new, 2007 diary.

Force of circumstance regrettably prevents the local *a cappella* group Chiswick Baroque from offering the concert in March 2007 that was advertised in the last issue of this Newsletter. We hope that they will perform for us instead, at a date to be confirmed, in Autumn 2007. Further news of this concert and other future events will be circulated in the fourth issue of this *Newsletter*. In the meantime, if you have suggestions of events that you might be able to help us to put on, or in which they would like to take part, we are always eager to hear from you.

Further to the re-election of the Friends' Management Committee at the AGM in May 2006, we have co-opted to the Committee Sheila McGuirk and Adrian Biddell. We are very grateful to them for feeling able to join the Committee at this time. Both have already contributed a good deal to our deliberations, and we look forward to much help from them in the future. We were also delighted that at the last meeting of the Management Committee, Father Patrick accepted with pleasure our offer to him and Pauline of Life Membership of the Friends.

### **The Friends' Management Committee**

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Minutes Secretary: Christabel Ames-Lewis

Treasurer: Malcolm Smith

Membership Secretary: Richard Ellis

Committee: Adrian Biddell, Mark Hodson, Sheila McGuirk

Ex-officio Trustees: (vacancy), Francis Kinghorn, Don Maxwell