

FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S CHURCH
SUNBURY-ON-THAMES
(Registered Charity No. 1048888)



NEWSLETTER
Spring Issue 2019

Dear Member,

As you read this, Spring will be "busting out all over" and we can, hopefully, put the winter weather behind us, looking forward to the warmth that summer brings. I am never sure whether I prefer our different Seasons, or would rather have more certainty that the days would be a certain temperature and we would therefore be able to book our BBQ on a specific date ahead, with confidence. But perhaps we would miss the added anxiety we now 'enjoy'!

Looking back, I hope you managed to catch the concert arranged for us by the splendid Barfield Hand Bell Ringers on Saturday 6th October. They perform on 5½ octaves of bells with enthusiasm and skill, and we were certainly entertained by their unique sound and very impressed with the programme they performed for us. The ringing was interspersed with appropriate readings and we were able to inspect and ask questions about their bells over a glass of wine.

Regrettably, we had to cancel our planned event for the 1st December, as the harpist was unwell. I was looking forward to those mince pies, as well ! Perhaps she will be able to come back to us another time.

Our FoSM Christmas card (2018) used a lovely photo' of the Apse and Chancel taken by Robert Salt, and I hope you have all visited and had a good look for yourself at the restoration work on the painted canvases of the Seraphs and Christ the King on the Apse wall and the Sgraffito murals in the Chancel. Remember that the Church is usually open weekdays 9-4pm. for you to wander round or just sit quietly.(Take a tour leaflet to guide you through some of our 'treasures' from the stand at the back of Church). With your help, we were able to give the P.C.C. a sizeable donation towards the cost of the restoration, and I think you will agree, it has been a well-worthwhile project., Phase 3, the flooring in that area of the Church, was completed just in time for the Bishop's visit to us on March 3rd ! What's next ? Well, let's wait and see.....

And then, in February, Kathryn Harries brought along some friends to give us a wonderful evening of light opera and song. We had two very talented sopranos, Gabrielle and Oxyzana, accompanied beautifully on the piano by Maya, to sing a well chosen mixture of light opera and show-songs. Also supported by Simon Douglas Lane who accompanied himself to give us a short selection of 'ditties'. in each half. Kathryn, unfortunately was unable to sing having had a very heavy cold, but managed to comper the nicely balanced programme that she had put together, with great humour and grace. The beautiful floral arrangement was lent by 'Dennis Van Wonderen flowers' for the evening, which came in useful when, at one point a Hydrangea bloom became a stage prop for an aria, at the end of which , it was cast aside over the shoulder of the singer into the audience ! (Good thing Dennis had another engagement that evening!) We had a good turn-out to swell our funds. So if you came, 'Thank you' for supporting the evening, and if you didn't, you missed a treat . Perhaps next time ?

Our next 'event' this year will be the **A.G.M. at 7.30pm. on the 29th May.** This occasion gives everyone a chance to find out what is going on in the life of the Church building, to have a say and perhaps think about becoming slightly more involved in F.O.S.M. (Dare I use the word "Committee" !). We would be really pleased to welcome you to swell our numbers and add new voices/suggestions to our way forward, and to air your views on how our funds are used etc. I know that you already have an interest in that you are supporting through your valued membership, so it is only one more step.....! Following our usually fairly short A.G.M., and suitable refreshment, Robert Shaw is coming to tell us about the proposed new development of the Millennium Embroidery Gallery. Catch the web site "events" or local publicity for details and look forward to seeing you there.

Heritage Open Day for us this year is on the **21st September** and we have, once again, invited the Sunbury & Shepperton Local History Society to bring along their display of photos and memorabilia of old Sunbury and area. They come with their expertise so bring your memories, stories and questions. There will also be some of our old Church records and pictures. It is a good opportunity to spend time browsing at leisure looking at the various monumental inscriptions, stained glass and records in a bit more depth, followed by a tour of the Bells to look at and perhaps try out, with tea/coffee and ice cream available to sustain, as usual.

We hope to have an event in October for you. More information in your next News Letter !

Sadly, our long-standing Web Master, Phil Beauchamp is retiring this year. Phil set up our web site in the 'early days' of IT , and despite moving away to Sussex some years ago, has continued to support us so well. The hosting company we use is closing down in a few months time and Phil feels that it is a natural time to hand on to 'another', so that he can concentrate his energies closer to home looking after Jean and publishing his own local 'Village News'. He will be sorely missed by us all and most especially by me. He has been very patient trying to keep me on the right path, designing the posters/tickets, updating our events and all that goes with setting up and running a web site. We are truly indebted to him and his contribution to the Friends, and wish him and Jean all the very best for the years to come.

A small snippet to end on: As you gaze at the newly restored art work in the Chancel /Apse, take a look at the capitals on the four pillars in the Chancel. These represent the four seasons, a mixture of Pagan and Christian symbols:

the flowers of Spring - Narcissus - Divine love

the flowers of Summer - Anemone, Clover - Trinity.

the harvest of Autumn wheat - symbol of the word of God

the Winter rose. - symbol of Christmas - the Nativity

Can you work out which one is which ?

P.S. Had you ever thought of receiving your News Letter by email? if this would be of interest to you, do let any Member of the Committee know.