



ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

St Mary's is at the heart of the community in Barnes and The Friends of St Mary's Barnes aims to enhance our community role as well as raise funds for the church and for charities. Our series of events throughout the year bring many people into the church and provide enjoyment and entertainment for people of all ages. They generate funds which are used to maintain our special building as well as support local, national and international charities. This year we have again had a full programme of events all of which have attracted numerous people into the church.

Our final event of the last year was the **Barnes Charity Fashion Show** in October 2023 for two sold-out performances (see photo on front cover). The enthusiastic audience enjoyed the latest fashion on the runway from eight Barnes fashion retailers as well as music from Sofia Kirwan-Baez and plenty of prosecco and champagne, followed by an Afterparty in Kitson Hall. The show was sponsored by Leblon London, Move It With Sam and Onside Law and proceeds went to FiSH in their 60th anniversary year and Home-Start as well as the Friends Fund.



Earlier in the year, the **Barnes Charity Ball** returned to its normal timing in February. The theme of *A Night at the Oscars* included roving paparazzi, Hollywood dancers, music and dancing to a live band and DJ. Vassos Alexander led a successful auction which raised £20,000 for the Friends Fund and other charities.

The **Barnes Music Festival** followed in March with the theme of *The Musical Environment* and a full programme of 37 events at six venues across Barnes, centred on St Mary's. There were outstanding performances from Alim Beisembayev, The Holst Singers, Sansara & Fretwork, Ferio Saxophone Quartet, James Larter, Timothy Ridout, Rachel Mahon, Henry Chandler with JP

Ekins and Roderick Williams with Christopher Glynn (pictured). New this year were a Toddlers Concert, Music with Wine Tasting and Singalong Abba. Taking part were 600 musicians with a total audience of 5500 and main sponsorship from Chestertons and Russell-Cooke.



During the summer we again hosted the **Barnes Common Artshow** in July in conjunction with Barnes Artists and The Friends of Barnes Common, this time with the theme *Living with Trees*. The show displayed paintings, sculpture, photography, prints, ceramics and film inspired by trees with an additional exhibition of paintings by *Picasso in the Park* children. The exhibition attracted many visitors, especially at the Private Views and on Barnes Fair day when the church was also open with other events.



The **Barnes BookFest** was held for a third year in September, organised in conjunction with the Barnes Bookshop and Magic Productions. Authors included Matt Frei, Lawrence Dallaglio with Owen Slot, Sir Trevor Phillips, Dipo Faloyin, Hannah Rothschild, William Sieghart, Robert Peston, Alicia Foster, Sir Tom Courtenay, Oliver Soden with Patricia Hodge, Simon Heffer, Helen Czerski with Tracy Edwards, Sir Anthony Seldon and Anne Glenconner with Gyles Brandreth (pictured). The total of 20 events drew an audience of over 2000 with sponsorship from Laurent Residential and International Literary Properties.





Also at the Barnes BookFest, Richard Harries spoke about his latest book *Majesty* and earlier in the year we hosted another event with him for the launch of his autobiography *The Shaping of a Soul – a life taken by surprise* in conversation with Julia Neuberger (pictured).

At our **Annual Choral Evensong** in 2022, our visiting preacher was The Revd Canon Andrew Zihni from Southwark Cathedral who was especially welcome since he had been unable to come at the last minute for the Barnes Music Festival Choral Evensong in March

All these events and activities have not only encouraged greater awareness of St Mary's and brought many people into the church building but they have also raised significant funds both for the church and for nominated charities. Most recently these funds have been used to pay for the repairs to the churchyard wall and audio-visual improvements. The Friends Fund continues also to pay for all utility costs, maintenance, repairs and capital projects for St Mary's.

The Friends Advisory Council, drawn from people connected with St Mary's and the Barnes community, comprises Michael Ross-McCall (Treasurer), Charles Haswell, Fouki Heller, Ted Muxworthy, Rachel Skilbeck, Paul Teverson, Isobel Woolf and the Rector and I am grateful to them for their enthusiastic participation in the planning and running of our events and the allocation of grants.

We regard all those who come to our events as the 'Friends of St Mary's Barnes'. Thank you for taking part and for your generous contributions. They make a big difference to the role which St Mary's plays in the community of Barnes and beyond. I hope you will continue to be involved.

Andrew Summers. Chairman, The Friends of St Mary's Barnes Oct 2023

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