



ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

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, provide enjoyment and entertainment for people of all ages and generate funds which are used to maintain our special building as well as support local, national and international charities. After the restrictions of the last two years, it has been good to run a full programme of events all of which have attracted numerous people into the church.



The **Barnes Music Festival** in March celebrated its 10th Anniversary with a full programme of 36 events at seven venues across Barnes, centred on St Mary's. There were outstanding performances from Steven Isserlis (photo), Magdalen College Oxford Choir, King's College London Choir, Nicholas Daniel, Davina Clarke, Henry Chandler with JP Ekins, Lucy Parham with Alistair McGowan, Robert Plane and Peter Holder. The anniversary was marked by *Ten for Ten*, ten new compositions which had their world premieres at the festival, including *Let's Build a Bridge* performed by 120 primary school children at a concert at St Paul's School. There had been 750 musicians taking part with a total audience of 4500 with main sponsorship from Chestertons.

The **Barnes Charity Ball** returned in May, delayed from its normal time in February. The theme of *Havana Nights* included a Cuban-inspired meal, music from the Cuban band Son Guarachando and dancing from Santee & Sasha. Vassos Alexander led a successful auction which raised £20,000 for the Friends Fund and other charities.



The **Barnes BookFest** was held for a second year in September, organised in conjunction with the Barnes Bookshop and Magic Productions. Speakers gave fascinating insights into subjects that ranged from Russia to celebrity memoir, from the legal system to the environment and from social history to crime and mystery to issues of identity and belonging. Authors included

Jonathon Porritt, Ben Macintyre, Dame Eileen Atkins, Tim Marshall, Theo Fennell with Richard E Grant (photo on front cover), Peter Snow and Ann Macmillan, Michael & Hilary Whitehall, Hugo Vickers, Simon Heffer, Leslie Thomas KC, Anthony Horowitz, Patricia Hodge, Bonnie Garmus and Robert Harris. The total of 19 events drew an audience of 2250 with sponsorship from Laurent Residential.

Earlier in the year we hosted book events with Richard Harries & Roger McGough **On Poetry** in February and Chris Patten for the launch of his **Hong Kong Diaries** in June to a packed church including many Hong Kong diaspora.



We hosted another **Christmas Cracker** celebrity event in December compered by Alistair McGowan featuring a new play by John Gorrie with Maggie Ollerenshaw and Geoff Leesley, a performance of *A Little Match Girl* by Nick and Ella Waring, piano pieces from Richard Sissons and violin pieces from Barnes Young Musician of the Year Mila Mitrovic. Another celebrity event was held in April **For Ukraine** featuring Sir Tom Courtenay, Roger McGough, Stephanie Cole and others including the Ukrainian singer Sofia Smirnova (photo), which generated over £5000 for Ukraine humanitarian charities.

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 Water*. The show displayed paintings, sculpture, photography, prints, ceramics and film inspired by water 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.



At our **Annual Choral Evensong** in 2021, we welcomed Rev Dr Brutus Green, Vicar of St Margaret's Putney who had taken part in the Barnes Music Festival earlier in the year.



The **Barnes Charity Fashion Show** returned in October 2022 for two sold-out performances. The enthusiastic audience enjoyed the latest fashion on the runway from ten Barnes fashion retailers as well as music from Camille and plenty of prosecco and champagne, sponsored by Lanson, Fine & Country and Onside Law. The show

included a special tribute to Dame Deborah James, who had appeared at last year's show, with the BowelBabe Fund in her memory being one of the charities supported along with Home-Start and the Friends Fund.

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 which have amounted to over half a million pounds over the last twenty years. Most recently these funds have been used to pay for the repairs to the churchyard wall and lych-gate (with a generous personal donation), lighting improvements, fire alarm installation, new albums and lectionary. 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), Steve Cox, Charles Haswell, Fouki Heller, Ted Muxworthy, Rachel Skilbeck, 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 have both made 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

October 2022

[The Friends of St Mary's Barnes, Church Road, Barnes, SW13 9HL](#)
friends@stmarybarnes.org