



THE FRIENDS OF
ST MARY'S BARNES



ANNUAL REPORT
2019/20

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.

2019/20 has been a year of mixed experiences for all of us with successful Friends events in the first part of the year followed by cancellations due to lockdown and continuing covid restrictions.

The *Barnes Charity Fashion Show* in October 2019 (photo on front cover) featured two nights of the boutiques of Barnes showcasing their latest fashions to enthusiastic audiences, supported by sponsorship from Knight Frank and Onside Law. The shows were judged the best ever with both nights sold out and over 500 people attending, raising £10,000 for the Friends, Home Start and FiSH. Our thanks go especially to Isobel Woolf who has now stood down as chair of the Fashion Show Committee after nine



years. In October 2020 we were unable to mount a show due to covid restrictions but instead launched *Barnes Charity Fashion Week* with a new Barnes Fashion Trail, special offers in all the shops, continuous social media and a JustGiving account for people to donate to FiSH and the Friends. The week was launched by BBC presenter Kate Silverton and generated considerable interest, activity and charity funds.

In November 2019 *Berlioz from B to Z* was a lecture illustrated with images and music given by Alastair Aberdare, chairman of the Berlioz Society to mark the Berlioz 150th anniversary.

Later in November *A Christmas Cracker* featured readings, plays, music, dance and poetry to launch the Christmas season performed by local and national celebrities. Hosted by Gyles Brandreth, performers included Stephanie Cole, Alistair McGowan, Charlotte Page, Timothy West, Jane Howell, and Nick Waring with the Olympic Choir and The Misfits.



The *Barnes Charity Ball* in February 2020 with the theme of *The 80s* celebrated the new decade remembering the era of shoulder pads, big hair, neon colours, Rubik's cube and some of the best pop ever. It was a special evening of fine food and wines, a wonderful selection of auction prizes and some amazing costumes. Entertainment was from The 80s Dancers with live music from Candy Apple Blue and the open auction led by specialist auctioneer Charles Hanson. The event raised over £40,000 for Under Tree Schools, Association for Post Natal Illness, Castelnau Community Centre, Glass Door Homeless and the Friends.



The *Barnes Music Festival* in March 2020 had as its theme *Musical Journeys* featuring a wide range of music crossing boundaries both cultural and geographic. With 35 events planned over two weeks at 10 different venues in Barnes, highlights included the opening concert with Hugo Ticciati and O/Modernt, also featuring Anna Hastrup, BBC Young Chorister of the Year; Bach *B Minor Mass* at St Michael's; world-famous baritone Roderick Williams, distinguished cellist Steven Isserlis in conversation with the younger generation; Howard Goodall presenting his film on The Beatles; Handel *Messiah* with Tiffin Boys' Choir; an ambitious production of Janáček's opera *The Cunning Little Vixen*; a Come & Sing *Oliver!* with over 100 adults and children taking part; and the award of *Barnes Young Musician of the Year 2020* to winner Xenia Edwards *violin* and runner-up Tian Hsu *trumpet*. Sadly the festival had to close early due to coronavirus restrictions but not before the final concert given by Henry Chandler *violin* and JP Ekins *piano* which turned out to be an emotional and fitting finale to a successful, albeit curtailed, festival. A Musicians Fund was set up to support the musicians who were cancelled in the final week and many people generously donated their ticket refunds to this fund. Sponsorship from Chestertons, Russell-Cooke and many others, and support from the Friends of Barnes Music Festival, ensured high quality performers,



enthusiastic audiences and a contribution to the community life of Barnes which has become increasingly valued.

At the *Annual Choral Evensong* in October 2019, our guest preacher was The Venerable Sheila Watson, Preacher at Lincoln's Inn and Canon of St Paul's Cathedral, with fine choral music led by the Director of Music Henry Chandler. The booklet *Over 1000 Years of Barnes History*, which was originally published for the Magna Carta celebrations in 2015, was re-printed to meet the demand from Barnes residents and visitors. St Mary's was also featured in two new books *100 Churches 100 Years* and *111 Churches in London That You Should Not Miss*.

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 churchyard and tower renovations and for piano reconditioning. The Friends Fund continues also to pay for all utility costs, maintenance, repairs and capital projects for St Mary's.

The Daily Friends continue to do a wonderful job welcoming the public to the church during the day and keeping it clean. The Friends Advisory Council, drawn from people connected with St Mary's and the Barnes community, comprises Patrick Findlater (Treasurer), David Barrie, Philip Bladen, Maisie Brown, 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 2020