



# FRIENDS OF ST LEONARD'S CHURCH HYTHE

## FEBRUARY 2023 NEWSLETTER

*Dear Friends (and potential new Friends),*

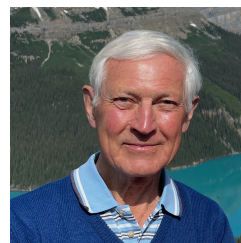
Welcome to this **42nd anniversary** edition of the Newsletter of the *Friends of St Leonard's Church, Hythe (FoSL)*, which includes a review of the past year's events, a look ahead to our full and varied programme of concerts during 2023, other music initiatives aimed at youngsters in particular, committee and membership news, the Onward Charity and a reminder of our AGM on 20 March.

### **Chairman's message**

It was with considerable relief and gladness that we were able to arrange a full programme of concerts during 2022, following the musical drought period caused by the coronavirus pandemic and a gradual return to near normal activities. The pattern of concert going has nevertheless changed somewhat with audiences generally not yet back to pre-Covid levels, which is why we are experimenting with different start times and concert durations to determine what best suits concert goers at St Leonard's Church. Your feedback views will be very helpful as we plan further ahead.

At our last Annual General Meeting held on 21 March 2022, Terry Whybrow stood down as Chairman after serving conscientiously and effectively in that capacity for the previous three years. Jean Wood also stood down as Secretary and, together with Tina Neave, resigned from the Committee after many years of dedicated and practical support and service.

Brin Hughes was elected as new Chairman and Barbara Mercier as Secretary, while Graham Johnson was re-elected as Treasurer to complete the triumvirate of



Honorary Officers. We also welcomed Rev Michael Darkins as new President of the Friends and ex officio member of the Executive Committee. During the latter part of the past year, we have been sad to lose the services of Rosie Vale (also a former Chairman and bar manager) and Terry who resigned from the Committee for different reasons. However, we have been pleased to co-opt Elizabeth Winters, a professional musician, onto the Committee instead.

My warmest and heartfelt thanks to all who have served on the Committee during recent years and to those who continue to help guide us into the future and work hard to ensure the success of our concert programme and thereby raising funds to help towards the cost of maintenance of our Grade 1 listed building and its contents.

*Brin Hughes*



### **Review of past year's events**

The first concert last year took place on Good Friday (15 April) when the **Shepway Singers** fittingly gave the world premiere of

*Requiem for a Pandemic*, a moving and emotionally charged work composed by local musician (and member of the ensemble) Michael Lewis.



*Shepway Singers*

**The Narropera Trio** returned to St Leonard's on 1 May to perform their narrated opera version of Weber's *Der Freischütz*, followed by the **Primavera Chamber Ensemble** who again delighted the audience with a charming programme of music by Mozart, Brahms and Dvořák on 3 June.

We then welcomed the opportunity to host a **Ross Winters memorial concert weekend** on 11-12 June to celebrate the life of one of the country's leading and hugely respected recorder performers, an inspirational teacher and, after his retirement, a Hythe resident, whose untimely death occurred on 14 February 2022.

During July the church rejoiced in hosting a series of marvellous concerts by some of the finest performers in the UK and beyond during the **2022 JAM on the Marsh Festival**, which has become an annual tradition to which we look forward with considerable eagerness again later this coming July.



*The Orsay Piano Quartet*

Our programme of concerts and recitals continued with an **organ recital** by **Richard Brasier** on 4 August, a **lunchtime violin and piano recital** by **Tom Klidzia and Mary Hill** on 20 August, **The Orsay Piano Quartet** on 10 September, a **Concert for Ukraine** on 17 September, an **organ recital** by **Stephen Pinnock** on 24 September, a **lunchtime recital** by pianist **Julian Jacobson with Nathan Winters (clarinet)** on 6 October, a **lunchtime recital** by **Oliver Nelson (violin) and Vasilis Rakitzis (piano)** on 27 October, and the **Lunaire String Quartet** on 18 November.

Traditional seasonal music followed with a Christmas concert by **The Band of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and Military Wives Choir, Shorncliffe** on 26 November, a lunchtime performance of **Christmastide music** by harpist **Harriet Adie** on 29 November, **Come and sing your favourite carols** on 14 December and, in conclusion, **Carols for All** on 17 December.



*Harriet Adie*

All in all, the Friends organised more than 20 music events in St Leonard's Church during 2022. We hope these gave pleasure and enjoyment to our audiences. Financially they resulted in an overall net profit of nearly £5,000 (including a very useful element from bar sales before and during concerts), which goes towards funding repairs to the fabric of the church and its contents.



### **Concert planning for 2023**

Concert planning for the year ahead is well under way. Details of concerts confirmed for the first half of 2023 are given in the March issue of the parish magazine and are also listed in the concert schedule distributed with this Newsletter. Further details about concerts, including the facility to book tickets for selected events online, can be



found by visiting the Friends website:  
[www.friendsofstleonardshythe.org.uk](http://www.friendsofstleonardshythe.org.uk).

### **Advance concert information and tickets**

Advance information about selected concerts organised by the *Friends of St Leonard's Church* will be sent by email to all who have provided contact details for this purpose; they will also receive information about other concerts in the local area. If you would like your email address to be added to this 'Friends of Music' database, please contact Brin on 01303 264470 or email: [brin.hughes@btinternet.com](mailto:brin.hughes@btinternet.com).

### **'Come and Play!' events**

Last October the Friends hosted the first **'Come and Play!'** informal Saturday afternoon of music making for local young musicians. A subsequent such event was held on February and a further one is planned to take place in June. These provide relaxed friendly opportunities primarily (but not exclusively!) for youngsters to demonstrate their musical talents on a variety of instruments and are proving to be increasingly popular.

### **Meet 'The King of Instruments'**

A parallel initiative by the Royal College of Organists, supported by the Kent County Organists' Association, aims to provide opportunities for anyone interested in the organ to enjoy demonstrations and gain hands-on experience of what it takes to be an organist. A first event in St Leonard's Church took place on a Saturday afternoon in early February and was well attended by primary schoolchildren, whole families and more experienced organists who wished to improve their skills.



A follow-on event took place on 23 February when pupils from Hythe Bay CofE Primary School visited the church to enjoy a similar opportunity to meet The King of Instruments.



### **Annual General Meeting 2023**

The Annual General Meeting of  
*Friends of St Leonard's Church*  
will take place on

**Monday 20 March 2023 at 6.00pm.**

Please see the agenda distributed with  
this Newsletter.



### **Membership and support for the Friends**

The Parish Church of St Leonard has been a fine, elegant and impressive landmark in Hythe for more than a thousand years. The main building dates from Norman times but has seen many additions, enlargements and improvements over the centuries. We welcome countless visitors each year who appreciate its architecture, history, features and traditions.

The main function of the *Friends of St Leonard's Church* organisation is to raise funds to assist the PCC in its care, restoration, preservation, repair and improvement of the Parish Church and its fabric, fittings, organs, pianos, monuments and stained glass. This is achieved through membership subscriptions, donations and the proceeds from concerts.

Everyone who cares for the beauty and traditions of our church building, whether or not they are resident in Hythe is cordially invited to become an Annual Member or Life Member by completing an application form available at the back of the church (or downloadable from the Friends' website).

Many members very kindly give money on a regular basis in order to ensure that the stonework, windows, fixtures and fittings are kept in good condition and to improve the accessibility of the building to all who wish to

visit it for interest or to attend services, concerts and other events.

If you also are able to support this valuable work, please fill in the form enclosed and return it to: The Treasurer, Friends of St Leonard's Church, Overfalls, 10 Station Road, Hythe CT21 5PN.

Thank you most warmly to those of you who have already committed to monthly giving, along with all those who have made donations the past year. These monies have been a significant and very welcome contribution.



### Onward Charity

Anne Marston was a generous beneficiary to St Leonard's Church and the music that takes place here. Gifts included our Steinway piano, the glass doors, and major contributions to both the restoration of the Harrison and Harrison organ and to the purchase of our chamber organ. Anne also funded at least two productions of the children's opera *Noye's Fludde* by Benjamin Britten, that involved lots of pupils of our church school as well as local musicians and a core of professionals. Perhaps less well-known was the fact that Anne supported both our Organ Scholarship and underwrote the finance of concerts managed by the Friends that involved young professionals, students at or recent graduates of the London music colleges who were starting out on a professional career with much talent and enthusiasm but, as yet, lacking an audience base.

Part of Anne's legacy to our community is the Onward Charity, a fund that can be used to carry on her work among young people, especially in the area of music and education. The Trustees are Caroline Marston (Anne's daughter), Carolyn Chivers (Headteacher at Hythe Bay CoE Primary School), Berkeley Hill (secretary) and Tim Hill (treasurer). An early decision was to commit to continue funding the St Leonard's organ scholarship and to underwrite future Friends' 'Young Professionals' concerts. The Trustees are intending to take a relatively

active approach to using up the funds over the next decade, and so you may become aware of several initiatives in the coming years to further the interests that Anne had in our community, particularly its young people, in a timely fashion.



### Church clock restoration

A plaque in the tower vestry at St Leonard's Church records that "The clock in the Church Tower was erected by public subscription in the first year [1901] of the reign of His Majesty King Edward VII to commemorate the long and glorious reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria".

The dial and hands of the clock are now in need of restoration. The PCC is proposing that this work should be carried out as a fitting project to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III on 6 May 2023.



The specialist clockmaker firm Smith of Derby has carried out a survey of the work that would be required and provided a quotation of £12,697+VAT (i.e. a total of £15,236.40) for removal of the dial and hands (entailing two engineers abseiling from the top of the tower), transport of the items to Derby for restoration (including application of gold leaf) in the firm's workshop, and subsequent return of the restored dial and hands to the church for reinstallation. The opportunity would also be taken to separate the driving tubes, remove corrosion, re-polish and correctly lubricate them. The gearing would also be serviced as necessary for correct operation.

A separate effort is under way to raise the necessary funds with donations invited from anyone who feels able to help in any way, however great or small your contribution. Grants are also being sought from various grant-giving organisations. An appeal letter is distributed with this Newsletter Thank you for any support you may be able to offer.

(Newsletter editor: Brin Hughes – 01303 264470)