

SKYLINE



February 2018



St Mary Abchurch
Courtesy: David Jessop

the magazine of the **FRIENDS OF THE CITY CHURCHES**

February Reminder:
Visit to Coventry Cathedral on 16 May

Friends with tickets for our tour of Coventry Cathedral are reminded that advance rail fares for 16 May should go on sale around 21 February. Friends should make their own travel arrangements with a view to meeting at the cathedral by 13:20; if you would like to join the group for lunch at the cathedral's Rising Café at 12noon, please contact Signe Hoffos on signehoffos@signefied.me.uk or 07740 476470.

Tuesday, 20 March, 10.45 for 11am
Sundials of the City
Walk with City Guide
Judy Stephenson

Meet: Temple Station forecourt

When timepieces were vastly expensive (and often unreliable), and mobile phones beyond imagining, most City folk relied on public clocks and sundials to tell the time. Donating a clock to a prominent building such as a church was a major piece of civic philanthropy, and even today some of the City's most striking public art is found in sundials, many commissioned for the Millennium. This walk celebrating the vernal equinox,

The draw will be on Wednesday 28 February. If you are not able to meet this date, any event not fully subscribed will remain open for later applicants. Meeting arrangements will be confirmed with your tickets.

will take in unusual time-telling devices on the western side of the City.

£9 per person; 18 places; booking essential

Friday, 23 March, 10.45 for 11am

Temple Place & all that Jazz
Walk with City Guide
Grethe Hauge

Meet: Blackfriars Station TfL ticket hall

Explore the rich history of the Inner and Middle Temple from the Knights Templar to barristers' chambers, by way of Shakespeare, Goldsmith and Dickens. The walk will culminate in a guided tour of the magnificent Two Temple Place, the house that Lord Astor had built, with the option to visit this year's special exhibition, 'Rhythm & Reaction: The Age of Jazz in Britain'.

£9 per person; 18 places; booking essential

Thursday, 5 April, 11:25 for 11.40am

Painted Ceiling Tour, Old Royal Naval College
Guided tour: involves 70 steps on sturdy staircases (lift available by arrangement)

The Painted Hall, Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich SE10 9NN

The Painted Hall of the Old Royal Naval College (1707-26) boasts the largest painted ceiling in greater London. As an ambitious conservation programme moves into its

final stages, this is one more chance to see it as never before: 60 feet above the ground on a solid observation deck. Our hour-long tour will look at the history of the building, and the current phase of the project. Historic Greenwich Market will feature antiques and collectibles on the day of our visit.

£15 per person; 15 places; booking essential

Wednesday, 18 April, 10.45 for 11am

The Market & the Monastery: a stroll round Smithfield
Walk with City Guide
Jill Finch

Meet outside Barbican Station, Aldersgate Street EC1A 4JA

Smithfield, just outside the City walls, has seen murder and mayhem and stood at the centre of religious persecution and the English Reformation. Its streets, alleyways and buildings form part of the footprint of London itself and offer a picture of mediaeval London before the fire of 1666, as well as a canvas for restoration and redevelopment which will see the new Museum of London opening here in 2022. This walk begins and ends at Barbican Station.

£9 per person; 18 places; booking essential

Wednesday, 9 May, 10.45 for 11am

London's Docklands
Walk with City Guide
Valeria Bellazzi

Meet outside Tompkins Restaurant 4 Pan Peninsula Square, Canary Wharf, E14 9HN. Nearest station South Quay DLR

Within living memory, London's docklands have transformed from a working inland port through a period of neglect to the highrise development still expanding today. This tour of the City on the docks explores its creation, its architecture and its public art — and a surprising church, on a barge in West India Quay. Make a day of it with a visit to the excellent Museum of London Docklands, and the many shops and eateries within Canary Wharf.

£9 per person; 18 places; booking essential

Monday 21 May 2018, 10.45 for 11am

More Mediaeval Churches of the City
Walk with City Guide
Steve Cook

Meet: Aldgate Station

The Great Fire of 1666 destroyed over 80 of the City's 100-odd mediaeval churches, and several more were rebuilt or destroyed subsequently, but a handful of valiant survivors still ring the City centre.

In this sequel to last year's introductory walk, City Guide Steve Cook will look at another group of churches which have endured fire, war and urban redevelopment to preserve the City's ancient roots hard by its most modern buildings.

£9 per person; 18 places; booking essential

EDITORIAL

In a corner of a foreign field, the Coptic Cathedral in Aswan, Upper Egypt to be precise, I happened upon a small tablet, which made the cockles of my FCC heart flutter:

IN MEMORY OF SOMERS CLARKE FSA

Sometime architect to St Pauls and Chichester cathedrals in England and designer of several churches and buildings including this church latterly residing at Mahamid Egypt
Born 22nd July 1841; died 31st August 1926;
Buried 1st September 1926 at Mahamid

Secondly, Venice, in peril as she is, is not short of churches. It seems only those with an incumbent and congregation are open to the public at any time, and there is concern that the buildings are deteriorating. Our president Marcus Binney, on a recent private visit to Venice, was able to meet Dino Gigante, who, when in London in the autumn, had been intrigued by the work of FCC, and felt our activities were relevant and transferable. Of course nothing is straightforward and the politics of Church and churches, municipalities and the rest (the world over, it seems) mean that it will be some time before Brian Evans will be needed to advise on the minutiae of church Watching. But let us take heart that one of the churches which Dino would like to see open for wonder is dedicated to San Giobbe. Job's steadfast patience will stand the Serenissima proud, and I hope to be able to report some progress in FCC influence here.

I am glad to be able to inform Friends that we have recently made a few small grants for necessary work: £2,000 each to St Botolph Aldgate for a piano; St Dunstan in the West for repairs to the clock; and

St Lawrence Jewry for glass doors. St Mary Aldermary receives £1,200 for floor springs. This seems as good a time as any to remind church administrators that FCC is happy to receive applications for grants: the necessary form is on our web site.

That's money out, but money comes in too: Waitrose gave us a bin, which yielded £140; and the Carol Service collection came to some £333 which gift-aiding will enhance.

Money, money, money: our treasurer Neil Graham has kept the books, dealt with the Charity Commission and the bank, FCC subscriptions, investment and bills and prepared the accounts for our scrutiny for four years, and not unreasonably feels that it is time for someone else to take a turn. Are you an accountant, book-keeper, chartered accountant? Could this be your pigeon? The matter is becoming urgent as Neil stands down at the agm in June.

Our front cover shews one of the most dramatic episodes at our headquarters. The tower needed to be braced against the tunnelling beneath the church: TfL's modernisation work. While the men were up there, the opportunity was taken to install a mobile phone mast, I defy anyone to spot it with the naked eye. The monitoring apparatus remains in St Mary Abchurch for a further six months, during which time the bell may not be rung. After those six months are up, should the church fall down, it will be deemed not to have anything to do with the tunnelling!

What does 2018 bring us? Notable anniversaries: read all about them.

JUDY STEPHENSON

WATCHERS' NEWS

BRIAN EVANS, CO-ORDINATOR

'THE TIME HAS COME, THE WALRUS SAID...'

Indeed, after four years co-ordinating the rotas etc, time to thank Rota Managers and Watchers for aid

and support, and for John Reynolds' transcriptions into print; and, time too, to celebrate our greatest footprint, now 19 churches. For us all, there continues the privilege of time in these historic buildings, admitting City worker and visitor alike, and that companionship of watching we value so much. So, we meet again at St Magnus the Martyr on Wednesday 21 March, as usual at 10.00am for 10.30.



Speaking of companionship, we end by remembering Walter 'Pip' Wright who brought to his many years as a Watcher, his time as a Parish Clerk and a very long association with St Sepulchre without Newgate, and entertained us with his other City memories. Here we see him conning ale.

ST BARTHOLOMEW: HOSPITALS, CHURCHES AND REFUGEES

On 24 August, the Church celebrates the feast of St Bartholomew: why that date was chosen and when he was martyred (supposedly by being flayed, hence his signature knife to depict him) we do not know.

It has long been assumed that Bartholomew is the same as Nathanael, though it is not a certainty. The gospels speak of Philip bringing Nathanael to Jesus and calling him ‘an Israelite worthy of the name’. He is also present beside the Sea of Galilee at the Resurrection. Although he seems initially a somewhat cynical man, he recognises Jesus for whom he is, and proclaims him as ‘Son of God and King of Israel’. John Ellerton’s hymn of 1871 ‘King of Saints...’ makes elegant use of this story in the second verse and of Nathanael’s extraordinary question, ‘How do you know me?’ which, as the hymn freely admits, is made all the more striking by the fact that we know so little of this apostle; ‘his saintly life is hidden / In the knowledge of his Lord’.

For someone who is so little known then, he is still remembered by name in many different ways. The Royal Hospital of St Bartholomew is named for him. The courtier Rahere travelled to Rome on a pilgrimage, fell ill at S Bartolomeo all’Isola in the River Tiber, nearly died, had a vision of St Bartholomew and vowed to build a hospital for the sick poor if he recovered. Henry I gave him land outside London’s City gates and in 1123 a priory and hospital were founded, run by Augustinian canons.

But ‘Barts’ (not ‘St Barts’) was not the only hospital in England named after St Bartholomew; there was also one in Sandwich founded in thanksgiving for victory over the French on St Bartholomew’s Day, 1217, but both these are younger than



Stained glass by Hugh Easton in St Bartholomew the Less. Barts’ Chevron with the Lilies of the Virgin Mary; Rahere in motley, notice St Bartholomew’s flaying knife (courtesy Angelo Hornak)



St Bartholomew’s Hospital, Rochester founded in 1078 for the care of the poor and lepers, and only closed in 2016.

That Priory and Hospital of St Bartholomew became rich like many others of that time, and had lands in Mells, Wenhaston, Suffolk amongst many other places. A small chapel was built on their land and valued at £2 16s. 8d. in 1291 but quite

what it looked like is unknown, unlike the chapel dedicated to St Margaret there. But the name lives on in Bartholomew Lane.

The dedication of churches to St Bartholomew is quite unusual. I could find just seven in Suffolk, and four in the City of London (St Bartholomew by the Exchange, demolished 1840, and its successor St Bartholomew Moor Lane demolished 1901, no longer exist). Compare that number with dedications to St Peter or St Mary.

Let’s now fast forward to 1517, when Martin Luther published his 95 theses in response to his rejection of several teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic Church, especially the Catholic view on indulgences. Luther taught that salvation and, consequently, eternal life are not earned by good deeds but are received only as the free gift of God’s grace through the believer’s faith in Jesus Christ as redeemer from sin. These theses were discussed at the Heidelberg Disputation of April 1518, exactly 500 years ago, but notwithstanding he was excommunicated by Leo X on 3 January 1521.

Those who identified with all of Luther’s wider teachings were called Lutherans, though Luther insisted on Christian or Evangelical as the only acceptable names for individuals who professed Christ. But a schism opened up: he translated the Bible from Latin making it more accessible to the laity, and influenced the writing of an English translation, the Tyndale Bible. His hymns influenced the development of singing in Protestant churches: perhaps his most famous hymn tune ‘Ein Feste Burg’. His marriage to a former nun set a model for the practice of clerical marriage.

In England, our own Reformation was driven to some extent by Henry VIII’s desire for an annulment of his marriage; the English Reformation was at the outset more of a political affair than a theological dispute. The 1534 Act of Supremacy, declared that Henry was the ‘Supreme Head on earth of the Church in England’.



Above: Rahere's tomb in St Bartholomew the Great (Courtesy John Bethell)

The Crown being short of money, suppression of the monasteries was an easy way of replenishing the coffers. But what would happen to Bart's Hospital if the Priory were suppressed? Just before he died, Henry VIII agreed to a petition by the citizens of London to re-found their hospital and in 1549 this separated from the Priory church which became the parish church as St Bartholomew the Great, with the Hospital's having its own parish church, one of the five mediaeval chapels of the old hospital and dedicated to the Holy Cross re-named St Bartholomew the Less. This is now reunited as one parish of Great St Bartholomew. I was churchwarden at the Less for several years after retiring from the hospital, and am still their Parish Clerk.

In France in 1572 King Charles IX's sister Margaret was married to the Protestant Henry III of Navarre. A few days later on St Bartholomew's Day, a massacre took place of many of the most wealthy and prominent Huguenots who had gathered in largely Catholic Paris to attend the wedding. It quickly spread outside the capital and as many as 30,000 French Protestants or Huguenots died. Henry of Navarre, when he eventually succeeded to the French throne, gave Huguenots the right to hold their religious views by the Edict of Nantes, but its revocation in 1685 provoked yet more Huguenots into leaving

their homeland.

They dispersed all over Europe but a goodly number arrived in England - bringing their silks and work ethic with them. Silk weavers in particular congregated on the edge of the City of London, in Spitalfields, others went to Norwich, and ultimately [George Courtauld] to Braintree, Essex, and Sudbury, Suffolk where there are still four working silk mills.

They were a very gifted bunch - they were also clockmakers, silversmiths (Augustin Courtauld, Paul de Lamerie) and doctors, one of whom, Gideon de Laune, helped found the Society of Apothecaries in 1617, 400 years ago last December.

We welcomed these refugees to our shores, although there was some discontent from local artisans but they could not deny the quality of the skills the Huguenots brought with them.

We saw the same thing in the years before the Second World War, when 100,000 Jews escaped from Europe, and each time we pass through Liverpool Street Station we are reminded of the Kinder Transport and the heart-rending stories that go with it. But those same refugees produced Lucian Freud, Walter Gropius, Frank Auerbach, Karl Popper, Hans Eysenck: the roll call includes 16 Nobel laureates, and 74 Fellows of the Royal Society, but also people like 10-year-old Ruth Heber and her seven-year-old brother Harry who left their family's rented rooms in Vienna for the last time 79 years ago. 'Our father

blessed us and we went to the station,' she remembers. 'It was in the evening so the public would not know what was going on. My parents were not allowed on the platform. They said: "Be a good girl and we will be writing and thinking of you and we will be coming very soon". But of course they didn't...'

And now we are fussing about how many refugees we will admit to the UK from Syria even though we agreed the figure of 20,000 over five years. We took just 350 lone children in February 2017 of the 6,000 planned originally.

But there are modern success stories. Malala born just 20 years ago is a Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest-ever Nobel Prize laureate. At her tender age she is known for human rights advocacy, especially education of women in her native Swat Valley in northwest Pakistan, where the local Taliban had at times banned girls from attending school. She was injured in 2012 by a Taliban gunman when he attempted to murder her. She remained unconscious and in critical condition in Pakistan but later improved enough for her to be sent to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham. She has gained A levels that allowed her to study at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford reading PPE. We did not shut the door to her. How many others are out there who might enrich our lives and make the world a better place? ✨

Letters

from TONY KING

Inside the churchwardens' pews of St Sepulchre are double hooks, some 15 inches from the ground: originally, five in each pew. The end of each hook is a ceramic, protective sphere disconcertingly reminiscent of an eye ball. Each hook is hinged to lie flat against the front of the



pew when not in use. Because of their position so close to the floor, they can only be used for small objects such as hats, which would have then covered both hooks; hassocks would have been too large. Has anyone seen similar hooks in churches and any ideas as to their special function?

from ALANA COOMBES

I always enjoy reading *Skyline* and finding out more about the City churches. As a granddaughter, daughter and wife of the regiment I was most interested to read the article about the RTR by John Bethell.



JAMES LOVELY

ST DUNSTAN IN THE WEST – ICONOSTASIS

Like many visitors and watchers I've been fascinated and intrigued by the iconostasis to the left of the high altar in **St Dunstan in the West**.

An iconostasis or wall of icons forms a screen separating the sanctuary, containing the altar, from the nave of the church or more purposefully it separates the activities on the altar from the congregation thus deepening the chasm between laity and clergy. At the end of the fourth century John Chrysostom (349-407) spoke of the Lord's table as a place of 'terror and shuddering' not to be seen by profane eyes and it became customary to screen it with curtains. From this time we see the practice of erecting a screen or iconostasis becoming commonplace.

The wooden iconostasis in St Dunstan in the West is of the Romanian Orthodox Church and would normally be at the Eastern end of the church. In a small church it might be placed at the junction of the nave and transept making the church appear T-shaped.

During restoration of Antim

Monastery, Bucharest, in the 1960s, the wooden iconostasis was replaced by a more traditional stone one.

The wooden iconostasis was carved by Petre and Mihai Babic and installed in 1861 with icons painted in the Renaissance style by Petre Alexandrescu and relocated to St Dunstan in 1966.

Behind the iconostasis is a small altar complete with crucifix, tabernacle, candles, lectionary, chalice and various other items together with many small icons adorning the walls. There are two Deacon doors, one either side of the central or Holy door. When an iconostasis is on the eastern wall the Deacon doors may be referred to as north and south. All doors would be open during services.

Much of the action takes place on the altar whilst the congregation remains in the nave, standing unless they are elderly or infirm. In the Russian Church, men stand on the left and women on the right whilst the positions are reversed in the Greek Orthodox Church.

In front of the holy door is a small glass case (*analogian*) displaying a page of scripture or an icon, the faithful may venerate this by kissing the case, lighting a candle and saying a prayer.

The area around the iconostasis is regarded as sacred and the congregation and visitors should not enter: only priests, deacons and readers are allowed in the sanctuary.

There are no absolute rules

governing the design, composition or construction of icons. Guidelines (*Horos*) drawn up at the Seventh Oecumenical Council in the year 787 are still followed today, although many traditions have evolved. It makes no difference whether icons consist of paint, mosaic tesserae or any other suitable material: whether they are situated in houses of God, on consecrated implements or vestments, on walls or on panels in houses or at waysides. It's an historical accident that the word 'icon' has become associated exclusively with painting in egg tempera over a gesso ground on wooden panels.

Icons on an iconostasis are arranged in order of importance and in St Dunstan it starts with Christ and his Mother either side of the Holy door. The next tier up (Festival) show scenes from the Bible: the festival of Pentecost is illustrated with tongues of fire above the disciples' heads (second from the right). Next tier up shows the twelve apostles, third from the left is St Andrew holding his saltire and above that are portraits of Old Testament prophets. Various scenes from the life of Christ are shown in the mid line vertical icons.

These icons are painted in the Renaissance, post mediaeval style showing some appreciation of perspective.

A very special thanks to Fr Constantin Popescu, Romanian Orthodox Parish of St George the Great Martyr, St Dunstan in the West for his invaluable help and encouragement. ✨

References

- Karl Christian Felmy *The Icon in Orthodox Theology and Devotion The Art of Holy Russia: Icons from Moscow 1400-1660*, Royal Academy of Arts 1998
 Natalia Markina *The Iconostasis*. Ibid.
 Paul Johnson *A History of Christianity* Penguin 1976
 Timothy Ware *The Orthodox Church, An Introduction to Eastern Christianity* Penguin New Edition 2015

ST PETER UPON CORNHILL & KING LUCIUS OF BRITAYNE

A cabal of historians has denied Lucius the honour of being this country's first Christian King and moreover the founder in the Year of Our Lord 179 of the Church of **St Peter upon Cornhill**. And yet, documentary evidence has been readily to hand for centuries, and there is still a plaque attached to a wall close to the chancel of Wren's lovely church.

A brief entry in the 1598 edition of Stow's *Survey of London* serves to stir the interest of the reader: 'There remaineth in this Church a table [presumably a board] wherein it is written, I know not by what authority, but of a late hand, that King Lucius founded the same Church, to bee an Archbishops sea, and made it the Metropolitan and chiefe Church of his Kingdome, and that it so endured the space of foure hundred yeares, unto the comming of Augustine the Monke.'

The year **1603** saw the publication of the only other edition to be published in Stow's lifetime. In the intervening five years, Stow's text had risen to 580 pages, a 20% expansion on the 483 pages of the first edition. The reference to King Lucius is unchanged. Both editions report the building of an adjoining library, the happy consequence of which was the conversion of Druids, 'learned men in the Pagan law', to Christianity. An intriguing early instance of specialised missionary activity, within what seems to have been a sizeable Druid community, a mere two hundred years after the Crucifixion.

It is at the hands of Anthony Munday that the **1618** edition, achieves massive proportions, running to 980 pages, twice the length of the

first. In fulfilling the wishes of the aged Stow, Munday incorporated two years' worth of Stow's jottings up to his death in 1605, and corrected a number of errors, the most flagrant being where he had credited Henry Fitz-Alwin, the first Lord Mayor, with being a Goldsmith rather than a Draper. But the bulk of the increase came from Munday's own work, much of it made up of detailed transcriptions from memorial tablets and tombs.

One consequence of this industry was a greatly enriched entry for King Lucius, with Munday being further spurred on 'because many have urged it very earnestly to me to let them to be further acquainted therewith'. The lovingly documented legend of Brute, the first king of Britain, is invoked to mesh in with the claims for the first Christian king of Britain. We are told that after the 1245 years of the Brute dynasty, came the coronation of Lucius in 124 AD, which marked the start of a reign of 77 years. The founding of the Church of St Peter upon Cornhill would therefore have occurred in the fifty fifth year of his reign.

At this point, two elements of uncertainty creep into the narrative: Lucius's place of burial some say is London and others Gloucester. More disturbingly, according to one William Harrison 'There is a Controversie moved among our historiographers, whether the Church that Lucius builded at London, stood at Westminster, or in Cornhill'. On the basis of an interpretation of street names, Harrison, for his part, appears to have favoured Westminster.

With the **1633** edition of the Survey, there is a major change of size from small-quarto to folio. Yet again, the text has been expanded to some 940 pages and, as heralded on the title page, is 'now completely finished by the study and labour of M H D (Humphrey Dyson) and others this present year 1633'.

The passages relating to King Lucius are unchanged from those in the 1618 edition, but with an interesting marginal note quoting the sixteenth century antiquary,

'Bee it knowne to all men that in the yeare of our Lord God 179 Lucius, the First Christian King of this Land, then called Britaine, founded the first Church in



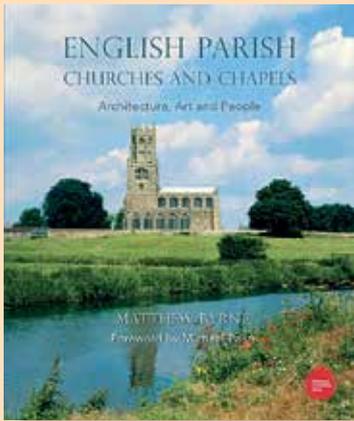
courtesy Robert Brabner

London, that is to say ye the Church of St. Peter upon Cornhill and he founded there an Archbishops See, and made that Church ye Metropolitan and Chief Church of the Kingdome and so it indured ye space of 400 yeares and more, unto the coming of St Austin the Apostle of England the which was sent into the Land by St. Gregorie ye Doctor of ye Church in the Time of King Ethelbert and then was the Archbishops See & Pall removed from ye foresaid Church of St. Peter upon Cornhill unto Dorobenia that now is called Canterburie & there it remaineth to this day, and Millet, a Monke which came into this Land with St. Austin, hee was made the first Bishop of London and his See was made in Paul's Church and this LUCIUS King was the First founder of St Peters Church upon Cornhill & he reigned king of this Land after Brute 1245 yeares. And in the yeare of our Lord God 124 Lucius was crowned King and the Yeares of his Reign were 77 yeares and he was buried (after some Chronicles) at London and after some Chronicles he was buried at Glocester in that place where ye Order of St. Francis standeth now.'

John Leland: 'There were three Archflamines. [posts served by senior clergy] 1. At London, the 2 at Yorke, the 3 at Caerlbeon upon the River Uske, builded by Belinus, and called Glamorgantia, now Chester, all destroyed by Lucius, because they were erected to Apella, Mars and Minerva: he builded three other churches in their stead'. By this stage the Lucius board is said to be 'fast chained in S. Peters church on Cornhill'.

Stow's Survey climbs to its zenith in the edition of **1720**: a total of 1684 folio pages. John Strype's name is rightly attached to this achievement. This edition reproduces in full the tale of King Lucius and happily notes that 'the Inscription is still preserved in the new built Church, and hangs in a Table against a Pillar'.

Today's historiographers still have the field to themselves in the confirmation of a Lucian royal line. ✨



ENGLISH PARISH CHURCHES AND CHAPELS: ARCHITECTURE, ART AND PEOPLE

Matthew Byrne
for the National Churches Trust
Bloomsbury Shire, 2017
£20

I am a little perplexed by this book, which I approached with great enthusiasm as anything with this title would grab my attention. I expected a photographic gazetteer, but this coffee-table volume discusses only 26 churches in too much detail. Is there a market for an expensive book with what amounts to a monograph on each of them?

In his introduction Matthew Byrne, who is a Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society, says the 26 churches are historically and geographically representative of the thousands of churches and chapels in England and cover all architectural styles. While everyone will have a different idea of what should be included, I do find it surprising that Somerset with all its marvellous towers is not represented at all, and that Norfolk and Suffolk each has only one. The title is also a misnomer in that there is only one chapel and one Quaker meeting-house.

Byrne gives us an introduction and then an introductory passage to each architectural period, which results in much repetition. But while he places great emphasis on the furnishings and monuments,

nowhere is any mention made of the importance of wall-paintings in a mediaeval church. He is much better at describing the individual churches - though at too great length - than in detailing historical developments, and I particularly liked how he linked the geology of the area with the church building.

It is a pity that such a beautiful book should start with a typo on the contents page and there are a number of other errors; for instance Rutland regained its independence from Leicestershire in 1997 and Sherborne in Dorset does not have a 'u'. Byrne has obviously not read Tony Tucker's book, as he thinks the only reason there is a sword-rest at St Stephen Walbrook is because it is the Lord Mayor's church.

However, all the photographs are stunning. They could not be bettered and those of the misericords at Ripple made me want to rush to see them immediately. ✨

Here are two books for older children which Friends may like to know about: less common presents, reflecting our own interests. They may not be in print, but are available. I cannot help feeling that Five Farthings uses expressions, once commonplace but which are now quite shocking. To be read before given, as much for your enjoyment as censure!
Ed

SALLY PHILLIPS

FIVE FARTHING

Monica Redlich 1939
The Farthings move to London so that Mr Farthing can receive specialist treatment. By chance Vivien finds a small flat by St Paul's Cathedral which is within their budget and they move there. An author's note states that, with a few specific exceptions, 'everything which the Farthings discovered is still there for other people to discover' though sadly this is no longer entirely true. Many of the little alleyways around St Paul's have gone to be replaced with office blocks, and in those that remain the small

butcher, baker and dairy are no more. Vivien is the main explorer and her most important discovery is St Sebastian's church which, we are told by the author 'contains many features which Wren would have put in if he had designed it'.

Wren's churches and other buildings were without doubt what Vivien now liked best in the whole of London.

Since her first discovery of St Sebastian's she had found that the City was simply crowded with his creations '... strange little places, some of them, tucked in between a high office building and a row of shops, but all showing in some way or another the special, magical quality that marked all Wren's work'.

There are interesting illustrations, where the buildings are always more important than the people, by Rowland Hilder. It is an appealing family story; but to me its main appeal is the picture of the City of London immediately before WW2.

COUNTRY COCK AND CITY DRAGON

Jessie Powell 1966
This is a highly imaginative tale of the adventures of a small boy who is taken by the weathervane cock on his local, country church to the City of London on Halloween. He turns out to be a key player in the battle for the City between the Dragon on St Mary le Bow and the Grasshopper of the Royal Exchange who wants to take over control. All the stone and metal birds and beasts outside the buildings, who all have their own names and personal characteristics, are involved on one side or the other. Timothy goes between them all with his own personal escort (the tiny cock from St Ethelburga). He finally wins the battle using the sword of St Paul from the Cathedral and the statue of Queen Elizabeth from St Dunstan in the West. A thoroughly satisfying and exciting story. A map of the City shows the position of all the beasts mentioned so that they can be found by visitors.



CHRIS WILLIAMSON

EYES TO THE SKIES

Atop St Mary Le Bow glinting in the sun is a dragon, wings outstretched as if in flight: it is quite a sight. The tower and steeple was once known as The Cheapside Pillar, and was regarded as one of the wonders of rebuilt London at the end of the seventeenth century.

The dragon has been there for some three centuries, since 1679. A sum of £4 was paid to Edward Pearce, a mason by trade, who carved a wooden model, and £38 paid to Robert Bird, a copper smith, who then made it. It stands some two hundred and twenty one feet above the street and is nine feet long.

As we all know the dragon is associated with St George, and it is dragons which mark the boundary of the City. If you look more closely at the dragon you will see that it too has red crosses under its wings. However, it was the cock or rooster which originally served as the chief weather vane.

Pope Gregory I said that the cock was the most suitable emblem of Christianity, being the emblem of St Peter, a reference to Luke 22:34 in which Jesus predicts that Peter will deny him three times before the rooster crows. The cock gradually began to be used as a weather vane on church steeples, and in the 9C Pope Nicholas I ordered the figure to be placed on every church steeple.

As a result of the Great Fire of London in 1666, many of the cockerel weathervanes were destroyed. Sir Christopher Wren replaced many of them with his and others designs, including the dragon. It is sometimes considered a symbol of strength and authority, and therefore perhaps it unites both the Church and the City.

When the dragon was raised in 1679 to its pinnacle it was accompanied by Jacob Hall, a trapeze artist of the day, who performed a high wire act, watched by a large crowd. There is a lovely account in the *Handbook of London*. Subsequently repairs were carried out to the dragon in 1760 and 1820 as it was so weather beaten.

As the dragon was lowered in 1820, an Irish worker sat on its back and used his feet to manoeuvre the dragon round obstacles. What a wonderful spectacle! I have no doubt that such events would not be seen today due to scaffolding and shrouds, let alone because of the health and safety regulations!

It is worth mentioning the grasshopper, standing 188 feet above the ground on top of the Royal Exchange. The dragon and grasshopper can therefore see each other. Londoners have imagined a relationship between the grasshopper and the dragon, perhaps reflecting the uneasy tensions between religion and commerce. It was Thomas Gresham, an Elizabethan merchant adventurer who founded the original Exchange.

In 1698, Edward 'Ned' Ward, satirical writer and publican, published a tract, *Ecclesia & Factio* (Church and Party), a dialogue between the dragon and grasshopper about religious freedom. Ward was a High Church Tory and launched several attacks on Low Church moderation and conformity, the first of them being with *Ecclesia & Factio*. It is written in rhyme and concludes by saying:

*'And from all Factious Quarrels and Despights,
Preserve the King, Church, Nation and our Rights;
That in One Faith, we may United be,*

And accord freely, in joint Harmonie.'

It is very thought provoking and well worth a read.

Another article in the *Edinburgh Monthly Review*, one of the most influential 19C British magazines which promoted Romanticism and Whig politics, tells of an apothecary-cum-would-be-prophet in Little Britain, a Mr Skryme who took to broadcasting a prediction of gloom. The article itself comes from *The Sketch Book* accumulated by Washington Irving, the American essayist, who gave us Rip van Winkle and wrote under the pen name of Mr Crayon – please excuse the pun here!

Mr Skryme gave his account to Mr Crayon, which said if the grasshopper and the dragon ever shook hands fearful events would take place. It was in 1820 that both creatures came to lie side by side in the same workshop. Mr Skryme is quoted as saying 'Others may go star gazing, and look for conjunctions in the heavens, but there is a conjunction on the earth, near at home and under our own eyes, which surpasses all the signs and calculations of the astrologers.'

Of this Mr Crayon goes on to write in *The Sketch Book* that Mr Skryme recounts George III dies, another monarch comes to the throne, a royal duke dies, another is murdered in France, radical meetings occur through the country, bloody scenes at Manchester at St Peter's Field when the crowd demanded parliamentary reform, the Cato Street conspiracy, and Queen Caroline returned to England.

Yet despite all the turmoil of religion, politics, fire and pestilence the dragon and St Mary Le Bow have stood their ground and continue to stand firm today. So the next time you visit St Mary Le Bow look up and spare a thought for the dragon standing aloft who endures in all weathers and perhaps give him a friendly wave! 🐉

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A SOLEMPNE AND GREET FRATERNITEE

The mediaeval parish church witnessed more than holy worship and the solemnization of those rites of passage that punctuate our lives. Dependence on neighbours mitigated the harshness of daily life and drew groups of men and women to common activities in their parish church, from members' funerals to an annual feast of a chosen patron saint. In London, by the 15C, we can distinguish the locally focused parish 'Fraternities' from what were craft 'Guilds' (though some used the term fraternity or mystery – from the Latin for professional skill). This distinction determined their ultimate fate: the former were dissolved in 1548 along with the chantries, while the Guilds' incorporation and mercantile strength ensured survival among today's City Livery Companies.

In the early 1380s, following widespread civil unrest, both groups came to be suspected of fomenting discontent. As a result, Parliament called for their registration. There may have been 150 Parish Fraternities across London by the early 16C, and the three at **St Botolph Aldersgate** illustrate their roles. All three levied regular dues, maintained lights at different times, and invested in plate, vestments and missals. The first, dedicated to the Holy Trinity (1374), was the wealthiest, paid a Chaplain to hold mass for Corpus Christi on Trinity Sunday and from land confiscated in 1548, a Common Hall was later restored to St Botolph. The St Fabian & St Sebastian (1377) and St Katherine (c1391) Fraternities were more concerned with parish welfare, with assistance to their members in sickness, poverty and old age, and their burial, if required. All were to attend mass on their respective Saint's day and the funerals of former brethren.



St Botolph Aldersgate mid 14C. Parish Clerks' banner in St Andrew by the Wardrobe

“A masse which docter Fayrefax gave to Jhus Chappell”

With regular patronal festivals, members' funerals etc., music would play a significant role in Fraternity life but records have been lost. There were limited choral resources in City churches, but the Parish Clerk (himself a member of the brotherhood of St Nicholas of Myra) would assist the priest by chanting the service in plainsong.

Information survives about two fraternities whose music set an altogether more elaborate standard. At St Helen's Priory, later at the Guildhall Chapel, masses were sung by the Society of the Puy. Dedicated to the Virgin Mary, they encouraged good singing, a model founded in the Auvergne. Meanwhile, in the 'shrouds' (ie crypt) of **St Paul's Cathedral**, the fraternity or guild of The Holy Name of Jesus was established by Henry VI in 1450 to observe the feasts of the Transfiguration and the Holy Name. Some other regular observances needed assistance from the Cathedral's choir. Reorganised in 1507, the guild received the mass setting “O bone Jesus” from Robert Fayrfax (1464-1521) to be sung every Friday and the feast day itself. Lincolnshire-born Fayrfax has left us some of the greatest Tudor music; such were the standards in the shrouds. One of the few to be revived by Mary I, the guild died with her.

Epilogue

The Fraternity of the Salve Regina, restored 1923, now provides the only semblance of a magnificent chapter

of London's mediaeval parish life. However, an earlier legacy of the community spirit underlying the Fraternities may have lived on to fortify City congregations, seeking better preaching, to appoint Evening Lecturers (see *Skyline* November 2017). Significantly, perhaps, St Botolph Aldersgate was among the first, in 1564. 

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 Friends will have been surprised to find no bibliography accompanying Brian's article in November: he supplied it; I omitted it in error, and include it now:

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THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANIES AND THE CHURCHES

2: *Painter-Stainers and St James Garlickhythe*

Every year on 18 October, the Feast of St Luke, the Livery of the Worshipful Company of Painter-Stainers, wearing full gowns and hats and carrying posies, processes to the Company Church of **St James Garlickhythe** to celebrate their patron saint. The Painter-Stainers are one of only three City Livery Companies to maintain this ancient tradition.

The first formal document describing the work of the Painters, the 1283 Ordinances, suggests that the main features of governance of the craft were already in place, and indicates that the early development of the painting trade should be seen in the context of a locally based fraternity of St Luke, the purpose of which was as much religious as commercial. Indeed under Elizabeth I and James II, the Liveries were open only to members of the Church of England. This requirement was removed by a series of Acts of Parliament, but the Painter-Stainers remain very much a ‘worshipful’ company, whilst recognising that worship can take many forms.

The connection between the Company and St James Garlickhythe can be documented to 1683, when a minister was desired to preach annually before the Company on St Luke’s Day. The acquisition of the Painter-Stainers own premises in 1532 in Trinity Lane came as a bequest from the King’s Painter and Past Master of the Company Alderman, Sir John Browne. St James Garlickhythe, just a very short walk from the hall, opened in 1682, having been rebuilt following the Great Fire. There have been occasions

when the customary service did not take place – notably in 1759, when virtually no one turned up and the service and sermon were abandoned! Also between 1954 and 1963 when the church was closed due to the discovery of death watch beetle in the roof timbers, and the service was conducted by the rector of St James at the Church of **St Mary Aldermay**.

The current church building, designed by Sir Christopher Wren and dubbed ‘Wren’s Lantern’ as its design allowed it to be flooded with natural light, and with a ceiling height of forty feet exceeded only by St Paul’s in the City churches, is considered by most to be truly beautiful, and is very much worth a visit. Amongst treasures such as the City’s only silver font bowl, and two rare Edward VI chalices are the Jubilee Bells, cast at the now defunct Whitechapel Bell Foundry, which hang in the tower of the church, and led the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant. The bells are regularly pealed.

The church is dedicated to the apostle St James. His emblem of the scallop shell can be seen throughout the church. The name Garlickhythe

derives from the Saxon word ‘hythe’ meaning dock or landing place. The stretch of the river close by the church was London’s most important hythe. Garlic was unloaded here for trade, it was considered an important medicine in the Middle Ages.

Twelve Companies are listed by the Livery Committee as worshipping in St James Garlickhythe, and the church benefits from the connection in many ways. For example the frame of the painting of the Ascension was gifted by the Joiners’ Company, the chandelier by the Glass Sellers, and the Tower Clock was restored largely through the generosity of the Vintners. Of course the Companies also benefit from the association with the church. Father Tim Handley, appointed Priest in Charge to St James in 2017, is also Honorary Chaplain to the Painter-Stainers Company, where he has quickly become a familiar and welcome face to many of the Livery. The Livery Companies do an enormous amount of charitable work. Unlike many of the Livery Companies whose field of charitable works has become rather tangential to their original purpose, the Painter-Stainers’ charitable arm continues to support the education of fine and decorative artists. Firstly, there is an annual awarding of prizes to young talent in schools around the country; secondly there are a number of generous scholarships to undergraduates at London Art Colleges, and thirdly the Worshipful Company runs a national open art competition.

In total the Companies between them donate in excess of £40 million annually. Since one of the functions of the Church is do to charitable works, it seems an obvious advantage to both organisations to pool their resources so that Church and Worshipful Company can work together in the best interest of the community in which they both operate. ✨

*With thanks to Chris Twyman, Clerk of the Painter-Stainers
Stjamesgarlickhythe.org/history
Royaljubileebells.uk
Cityoflondon.gov.uk*



Left: the front cover of my menu for the Feast of St Luke, reproduced from the invitation for the feast of 24 November 1687. It depicts Fame posing for an artist, with the Company Arms above. Right: in hat and gown and carrying a posy in October last year after processing.

CRYPTS OF CITY CHURCHES

The cataclysmic Great Fire of 1666 had a profound effect on the City of London. As well as houses, livery halls and City gates, eighty-six churches were destroyed along with St Paul's Cathedral, where the congregation of Saint Faith, who met in the crypt's Jesus Chapel also lost their place of worship. Of these churches thirty-two were not rebuilt, and twenty-four others in the east or north-east were not affected. Crypts were destroyed with their buildings, so the space available for intramural burial declined.

During the next thirty years Sir Christopher Wren, together with Robert Hooke, Peter Mills and Edward Jerman designed and built St Paul's Cathedral and fifty-one replacement churches. Most of these had vaults beneath them and nearly all had burial grounds, which were well-used because the population of the Square Mile was still large; most of the churches not rebuilt were still used as burial grounds.

During the next 150 years fourteen of the fifty-one replacement churches were rebuilt, either to enlarge them or because of dilapidation; all except **St James, Duke's Place**, had a crypt as spacious as the church above. Rarely do the published histories of these churches mention the crypts.

My book *Crypts of London* lists these and those of Westminster.

Obviously it is possible to visit the churches that have survived and establish precise details of their crypts; where it is not possible to enter, burial registers give details, and often faculties authorising their destruction or the removal of coffins can supply the layout.

Incumbents and churchwardens decided to use the crypts to earn money, and my research reveals that until 1700 the City parishes received



St Andrew Holborn monument at Ilford, 1863

between 7% and 20% of their non-poor rate annual income from burial dues. After 1700 the figure could be as high as 26.9% (at **St James Garlickythe**). The wealthy resided in the crypt, others paid less in the churchyard.

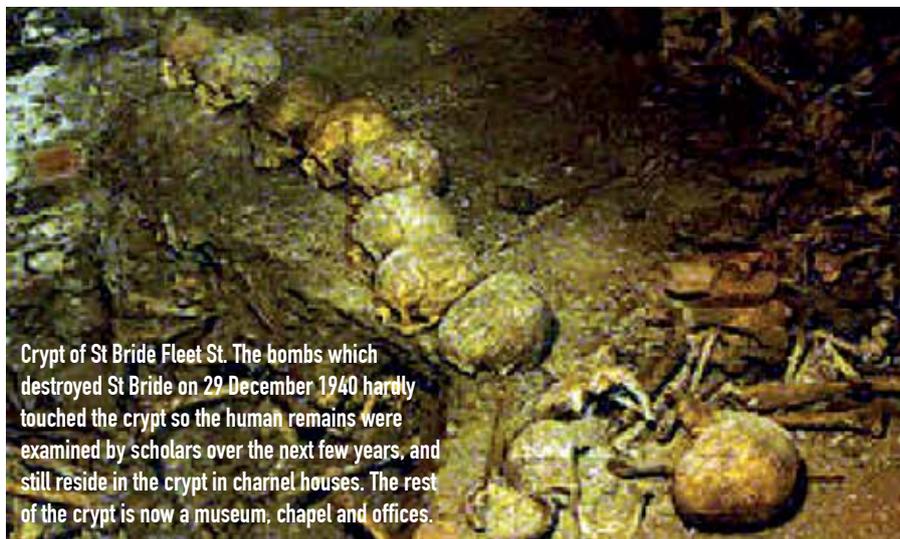
Crypts were also used as charnel houses because bones were often removed from the churchyards after

thirty or so years, to make room for new arrivals.

In the early 19C growing concern about the capital's poor sanitary conditions largely centred on the overfull churchyards and evil smelling crypts, so after 1852 burials were forbidden in the Square Mile and coffins began to be removed to the City of London Cemetery in Ilford or to Brookwood, Surrey (by train: the station café had a notice 'Spirits served here!')

Twenty of the present crypts in the City have not been cleared of their coffins and four have been partly cleared. St James Garlickythe still has its coffins and possesses a desiccated mummy of a man known as Jimmy, who has been moved around the building over the years, sometimes on view and sometimes not. It is thought that he lived between 1640 and 1800. By the 1850s he was an established attraction who could be seen for a modest fee. He was going bald, had pierced ears and his teeth were well worn. At present he resides in a wooden casket in the tower, but plans are being made for him to be buried.

The four bay crypt at **St Andrew Holborn** designed by Wren can now be seen for the first time because 1,300 coffins and around 1,600 skeletons that filled it to the ceiling were cleared in 2001-02, and reinterred in the City of London Cemetery. There they joined around 11,500 bodies removed in 1863-69 from the churchyard to the north of the church, so that Holborn Viaduct could be built. ✍



Crypt of St Bride Fleet St. The bombs which destroyed St Bride on 29 December 1940 hardly touched the crypt so the human remains were examined by scholars over the next few years, and still reside in the crypt in charnel houses. The rest of the crypt is now a museum, chapel and offices.

CECIL KEITH FOYLE WRIGHT

In St Mary Abchurch, on the wall just inside the door, rather in the dark and hard to see, there is a memorial plaque:

'In Memory of Cecil Keith Foyle Wright FRCO, ARCM., organist of this church, second lieutenant 10th Batt. Royal Fusiliers. Born July 15th 1890. Killed in action at Ablanzeville, in France August 21 1918. God gave Man skill that he might be honoured in his marvellous works. Eccles XXXVIII 6.'

Cecil Wright was the son of Thomas Wright, a corn merchant, and his wife Alice, and was born and grew up in Salisbury, where he attended Bishop Wordsworth's School in the Cathedral Close. By the age of 20 he was a sufficiently accomplished musician to gain entrance to the Royal College of Music, and during his time there he became an organist at St Mary Abchurch. His studies were interrupted by the outbreak of war, when he joined the 10th (Service) Battalion Royal Fusiliers City of London Regiment, arriving in Boulogne on 30 July 1915 and rising to the rank of Second Lieutenant. He was killed at Ablainzeville (the village name is incorrectly spelt on the memorial plaque) in an attack on the northern sector of the Somme during the Battle of Bapaume. According to the Battalion War Diary the day was marked by 'heavy ground mist and under machine gun fire from the very beginning'.

These are the bare facts extracted from surviving records, but the Royal College of Music's obituary for Cecil paints a full and vivid picture of the sensitive and talented young student. We reproduce it in full by kind permission of the Royal College of Music from their magazine, Spring Term 1919.

'Second Lieut Cecil K F Wright. 10th Battalion Royal Fusiliers

'The War is over; the sorrows brought by it remain; and it is with deep regret that we record the death in action of Second Lieut Cecil K F Wright, killed in France on August 21st, aged 28 years. To have died in that decisive and gigantic set of battles which secured the freedom of the world is as noble a death as man could have, but for those who are left to mourn, the loss is great indeed.

'He was the son of Mr and Mrs Thomas Wright of Salisbury. From early childhood he showed a marked love for music, and was placed under Dr Luard Selby, of Rochester, for a time. Later he came to the Royal College of Music, where he remained for three years, being with Sir Walter Parratt for Organ, and Mr Herbert Sharpe for Piano. While still a pupil of the College he was appointed organist of St Mary Abchurch, Cannon Street, EC, and the present writer (who heard him play his trial service) recalls how triumphantly he proved his abilities and carried all before him. There is no doubt that if his life had been spared he would have made an honourable place and a successful career for himself as an organist.

'He joined the Army in January 1915, and went to France in November of the same year with the Public Schools (20th) Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers. In January 1916, he was so severely wounded, that he was in hospital for six months, but in November 1916 he was sent back again to France, where, being still far from strong, he contracted trench fever in January 1917, and was again invalided to England. He went to France for the third time on August 2nd of this year, and less than three weeks later he was killed in action.

'To a nature so thoughtful, conscientious and sensitively artistic as Cecil Wright's, war must have been repellent to the uttermost, yet he did his part faithfully as an Englishman, unflinchingly as a soldier, and by his death College has lost one who was equally worthy of regard as a man and a musician.

'He always used his music as a talisman to bring joy to others. During

his convalescence at Eastbourne he did much valuable work as Musical Director of the Cavalry Cripples' Concert Party: and after his death a brother officer wrote from France describing how Lieut Wright "used to play and make the men sing and sing until they could sing no more, and so for a time at least they were happy and forgot their troubles and the horrors of war". MMS. Leonard Stephen Sadgrove, Private, Royal Fusiliers.'

The *Musical Times* of 1 December 1922 included a report on the unveiling of a memorial on 10 November to the 38 staff and students of the Royal College of Music lost in the war. '... the orchestra under Dr Adrian C Boult played the Funeral March composed by Sir Charles Stanford After this the audience sang "Jerusalem".' Sir Robert Younger then read the names of the fallen and delivered a brief address in which he spoke of the readiness of musicians to answer the call of duty... the ceremony concluded with the singing of Vaughan Williams setting "For All The Saints". In addition to St Mary Abchurch, Cecil is remembered in the 1914-1918 Book of Remembrance in St Sepulchre, Royal Fusilier Chapel, on the memorial board at Bishop Wordsworth's Church of England Grammar School in Salisbury, and on the war memorial of St Luke's Church, Battersea. ✨

Letter to the Editor

from CHRISTINE DOUGHAN
The free leaflet for visitors available in St Botolph Aldgate states that the carving on the organ case is by Grinling Gibbons. There is no proof of this whatsoever and highly unlikely. It is ironic that, in a separate detailed and scholarly leaflet about the organ I obtained from the church some time ago, it states that 'the case work is not of the highest quality'. Pevsner writes that it was probably the work of John Byfield in 1744. (Gibbons had died in 1720.) I am ashamed to say that this error was copied again and again in previous histories of the church and I had not perused them sufficiently to spot it. There's a lesson there!

THE CITY CHURCHES CAFFEINE TRAIL

What links **St Mary Aldermary** and **St Stephen Walbrook**? The shield in the photo below is a clue and you'll find it in both churches. In **St Mary Aldermary**, it's in one of the windows at the west end and is a nod to Sir Henry Keble, the Lord Mayor, who paid for a new church in 1510. It was such a pleasing church that the parishioners insisted Wren, and his wonderfully adaptable craftsmen, should rebuild it more or less as it had been before the Great Fire swept through it.

The same shield is on one of the kneelers in **St Stephen Walbrook** and I'll save you considerable effort by suggesting that you concentrate on the high-backed seats, reserved for the powers-that-be. The great, and very contentious, reordering of the church's interior in 1978-87, embraced more than Henry Moore's altar and The Revd Dr Chad Varah seized the opportunity to have the shield of his Oxford College – Keble – on his kneeler.

This was one of the City church quirks that I shared during my caffeine trail tour for FCC friends in



Kneeler in St Stephen Walbrook

November. We confined ourselves to churches where coffee and other refreshments are usually available for visitors. **St Stephen** has a party wall with a coffee shop. Some of the offerings are very basic, as at **St Lawrence Jewry**, where you make your own coffee and leave a donation. The caffeine rush aids concentration on the details of the Wren window immediately above the coffee-making equipment.

Other offerings are considerably more sophisticated, as, for example, at **St Nicholas Cole Abbey**, where we began our tour. In addition to coffee, the Wren Cafe sells soft drinks and many tempting snacks in a Wren setting that was inaccessible just a few years ago. It is a very convenient place to begin a tour, as it has plenty of seating (and fascinating toilets, which are set into the very thick walls of the church).

Finding space for these fund-raising opportunities is not usually as easy as at **St Nicholas**; and **St Mary Aldermary** has had to display notices to remind laptop junkies that some of the pews have been set aside to perform the church's original function of Christian worship. At **St Mary Woolnoth**, you will find Hana, the church's *barista* of some ten years, shoehorned into the vestibule, with barely space for her coffee apparatus; some packets of crisps; and a few chairs. The photo above shows the very modest sign to persuade you to pause awhile during your rush through the City. It is particularly



Outside St Mary Woolnoth

relevant at **St Mary Woolnoth**, which in a corner with the beautiful old clock mechanism, quotes T S Eliot's *The Wasteland*. We think of the millions of commuters who feel they have no time to stop and stare at their magnificent churches: 'And each man fixed his eyes before his feet. Flowed up the hill and down King William Street, to where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours with a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.'

What better, at 9am, than to stop for a coffee and revel in a bit of Hawksmoor. ☞

STEVE GLASON

A Wander

*St Stephen Walbrook – so divine
Samaritans' first listening line
New vista opened last few days
Near Mansion House and those
byways.*

*Cheapside's masterpiece – Bow Bells
St Vedast – former empty shells
Gutted by incendi'ry fires
Walls remaining and those spires.*

*Interiors a hymn to Wren
Have been rebuilt by Fifties men
St Lawrence Jewry – treat in store
Impressive reredos – and more!*

*I left this church in Gresham Street
Two hours of walking – aching feet
Vowed to return – at gentle pace
The City is a sacred place.*



The old clock mechanism and verses from the *Wasteland* at **St Mary Woolnoth**. (Photo Judy Stephenson)



THE DECORATED CEILING IN ST BOTOLPH ALDERSGATE

St Botolph Aldersgate has one of the least impressive exteriors of any of the City churches and is easily overlooked in its corner of the delightful Postman's Park. The interior, therefore, comes as something of a surprise as the overall design and the quality of many of the furnishings are of outstanding merit.

The mediaeval church, situated just outside the old London Wall, escaped the Great Fire of 1666 and was not rebuilt until the end of 18C. The architect, Nathaniel Wright, was clearly influenced by the work of George Dance the Younger in **All Hallows London Wall**, some 20 years earlier, as can be seen from the decoration of the apse in the east end and the clerestory windows.

For me, the most striking element of the design, however, is the ceiling, which consists of plaster squares, within which are circles with a key pattern, carvings in the corners, and, in the words of the church's own 1985 leaflet, 'plaster rosettes which have flowers with hanging stamens which retain their original gaslights'. Around the edge of these rosettes are decorative feathers,



which particularly appeal to me because they appear to be the same Prince of Wales's feathers that are the emblem of my alma mater, Oriel College, Oxford.

These exquisite plaster carvings are, to the best of my knowledge, unique and certainly deserve to be ranked as one of the treasures of the City churches.

Letters to the Editor

from IAN COBB

Tony Tucker rightly calls the Grinling Gibbons font cover breathtaking. Horace Walpole observed that 'there is no instance of a man before him who gave to wood the loose and airy lightness of flowers and chained together the various productions of the elements with a fine disorder natural to each.'

The font cover at **All Hallows** was carved in 1681, for which Gibbons was paid £12. It suffered from neglect until it was improved by painting. In January 1895 a parishioner wrote: 'I never walk by the font without wondering how long the coating of white paint will be allowed to veil the glories of the richly carved cover, and it is passing strange that it should ever have been desecrated with paint. Is the cleaning process now a work of impossibility?' The paint was eventually removed, but over the years dust and grime took their toll. Restoration work was begun in October 1968, the complexity of the carving, with over 300 pieces was fraught with difficulty. Now finished it reveals some of Gibbons' best full

length cherubim with a dove at the crest. It is said that the model for the cherubim was Gibbons' own children.

The other City church with an impressive Gibbons carving is the reredos of **St Mary Abchurch**. This, like the font cover, was covered in white paint. E Hatton in his *New View of London 1708* describes the reredos as 'the most magnificent Piece of carved Work I have thus met with'.

Although not in the City, two other wonderful examples of Gibbons' work can be seen. The reredos in St James Piccadilly and a panel in St Paul, Covent Garden, originally in St Paul's Cathedral.

Nahum Tate wrote in his *To Mr. Gibbon on His Incomparable Carved Works*: 'With silent wonder oft have I beheld Thy Artful works of Nature scarce excell'd.'

from GWYNETH DEAKINS

On a recent visit to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, USA, I was surprised to see a painting by Benjamin West – 'Devout men Taking the Body of St Stephen' displayed in a prominent position, with a label

noting that it had originally been commissioned as an altarpiece for St Stephen Walbrook. I wondered how it had found its way to the MFA. The painting was given to St Stephen in around 1776 and moved from the east to the north wall by 1848. It was removed altogether in 1978 and put into storage. As it had been wished upon the church by an absentee vicar and was difficult to fit into the church, it was never regarded fondly by the parishioners. Faced with high insurance costs they resolved to sell it, for which they needed official permission. The C of E's Consistory Court considered the matter and found in favour of the parishioners. The Chancellor of the Court said some harsh (and to my mind unfair) words about the incompatibility of the painting with the Wren concept of the church. The church was given permission to sell the painting and received an export licence in 2014. It was bought by an anonymous purchaser who then donated it to the Museum. No doubt more people see the painting now, and in a better setting, than when it was in St Stephen. Certainly more see it than when it was in storage. I think this is a story with a happy ending.

TONY ZOTTI

WITH PHOTOGRAPHS BY
DAVID JESSOP

THE CAROL SERVICE

The FCC carol service was held on Thursday 14 December 2017, conducted by our Chaplain, The Revd David Goodburn. His Christmas message was we should consider carefully, taking our time to look forward to the coming of our baby Jesus. Our chaplain was once a policeman on horseback with the Metropolitan Police.

Our organist Ian Shaw played excellent music on the organ, fortunately mended in the nick of time for the service, and the singing was led by the Vocal Consort Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham College, directed by Andy King, head of music and drama.

It was good to see so many Friends and friends at the service. **St Mary Abchurch** was appropriately decorated with candles, Christmas tree and mistletoe around the lights. After the service, mulled wine, mince pies and more was served, thanks to Abu, Ashraf and Nury from Sainsbury in Cannon Street, and Jason and Donato from Tesco Metro in Cheapside.

Thank you also to all the Trustees of the Friends of the City Churches who arranged this excellent service, which made the start to a jolly time towards Christmas.



THE FRIENDS OF THE CITY CHURCHES

St Mary Abchurch Abchurch Lane London EC4N 7BA

www.london-city-churches.org.uk

020 7626 1555

contact_us@london-city-churches.org.uk

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