



Barts Guild News

ISSUE 26

NOVEMBER 2025

Guild AGM 2025

Stephen Edmondson, Guild Chairman, welcomed members, volunteers and guests to the 113th AGM. Steve praised the magnificent restoration of the Great Hall and the achievement of Barts Heritage.

The Chairman paid tribute to our retiring President, Ann Wickham, for her 51 years of service to the Guild and to the Hospital. "Ann was a member of the Management Committee for over 14 years, served two terms over 7 years as Chairman, 13 years continuously as Vice-Chairman and, for the last 17 years, as President.

"Ann's charitable reach went far beyond the Hospital, including holding important roles in the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies. She spent 19 years supporting Guildford Cathedral, becoming honorary Curator of the Cathedral, and 32 years as a member of the Worshipful Company of Barbers and, like late husband John (senior Urological Surgeon to Barts), being made a Freeman of the Company.

"Very appropriately and being hugely deserved, such dedicated service has been rightly recognised with some very prestigious awards, including The League of Mercy Medal in recognition of 50 years of voluntary service, Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Nurses, and the ultimate accolade in 2023 when Ann was awarded the British Empire Medal for her



AGM 2025 (L-R): David Meara, Penny Wainwright, Lady Mayoress Florence King, Chairman Stephen Edmondson, and President Ann Wickham.

Photograph: Bob Cooper

charity work at Barts and the community in London.

"As an acknowledgement and thanks for Ann's extraordinary service she will be conferred with an Honorary Life Membership and, without precedent, is conferred with the title of President Emerita of Barts Guild."

Please turn to page four for the Chairman's full tribute to Ann.

Ann was then invited by the Chairman to give her last President's address to the Guild.

Continued on page two.

Guild AGM 2025 cont.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Ann welcomed members and friends, the Lady Mayoress, Florence King, and guest speaker, David Meara.

Ann was delighted that the Great Hall was now restored to its former glory and the grime from many years of candle and cigar smoke had been removed. The Hogarth paintings were wonderfully restored too and she was particularly pleased to see that the Guild's charitable contribution to the project had been acknowledged in gold lettering.

Ann said it was a privilege for us to be here again at the venue for the Guild's first AGM in 1911, and added it had been an honour and a privilege to be part of the Guild and she thanked our Royal Patron, HRH The Duke of Gloucester for his support. Ann also offered her thanks to Barts staff, Guild volunteers and gardeners,



Ann's last AGM address as President.

Photograph: Neil Ritson

Graeme and Neil, and members for their friendship and support.

Ann concluded by saying she was confident that the Guild's continued support for Barts patients and staff will continue to be encouraged by our new President, Penny Wainwright.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Keith Bottomley presented the accounts and stated that the Guild was in good health financially. There were no questions.

Keith told us that it was a pleasure to work with the Guild as he comes from a family of nurses. He thanked Hilary Tarr for her meticulous bookkeeping and wished his successor, Vice-Chairman Jean Stevenson, the best of luck.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CHANGES

The AGM formally confirmed the following changes to the Guild's Elected Officers and Management Committee.

Jean Stevenson was appointed Hon. Treasurer; Heather Byers, Dr Claire Rathwell and Alex Shipolini were appointed as Trustees; and Lesley Evans was re-appointed as a Trustee.



Keith delivers his final report as Treasurer.

Photograph: Neil Ritson

Keith Bottomley, Julia Briscoe, Hilary Tarr and Dawn Wright all stood down as Trustees and were thanked for their contribution to the Guild. Hilary was presented with flowers to recognise her many years of service.

Continued on page three.

Guild AGM 2025 cont.

NEW PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Penny Wainwright spoke of her long connection with Barts. Her father, Dr Laurence Cartledge, was an ophthalmic surgeon at the Hospital and on the 20th anniversary of his death, Penny was inspired to donate money to the Guild and become involved with our charity. She described herself as “a new girl” and encouraged members and volunteers to contact her with their ideas and thoughts.

Please turn to page eight where Penny introduces herself to the Guild.



*Penny's first address as President.
Photograph: Neil Ritson*

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Stephen Edmondson opened by saying he was delighted we were able to hold our AGM and, on December 3rd, our 'A Celebration of Christmas' concert in the Great Hall.

He thanked Trustees and volunteers for their hard work in keeping the Guild running smoothly, and made special mention of Hilary Tarr for her remarkable contribution over the years.

Steve acknowledged that the Guild needed a refresh to remain truly relevant to Barts in changing times. However, he assured those present that his ideas and aims were about evolution rather than revolution.

Please turn to page twelve for the full text of the Chairman's report.



*Steve delivering his Chairman's report.
Photograph: Neil Ritson*

OUR GUEST SPEAKER

David Meara was formerly Rector of the Journalists' Church, St Bride's Fleet Street, and is Archdeacon of London Emeritus and President of The Betjeman Society.

David's interesting illustrated talk described the development of print media in Fleet Street since Caxton's assistant set up his first printing press. He then went on to relate Fleet Street scandals, such as phone hacking, and the necessity for the Church to speak truth to power, especially in difficult circumstances.

OUR GUEST OF HONOUR

The Lady Mayoress, Florence King, gave a charming speech stating that as a volunteer herself she understood and appreciated the value of voluntary work. She praised the work of the Guild and the dedication of the volunteers.



Chairman's Tribute to Ann Wickham

The Chairman's tribute was delivered at the 2025 AGM.

After attending school in Wales and Ireland, Ann started her nursing training at the Lister Hospital, followed by midwifery training at Broadgreen in Liverpool. Ann then moved to the Hammersmith Hospital for her specialist theatre training which, in 1961, coincided with the start of her long and happy marriage to John Wickham, who for many years was the senior, highly respected and sought after Urological Surgeon to Barts, who pioneered early minimal access and robotic [keyhole] surgery.

Ann's long history of charitable works includes 25 years supporting and holding important roles in the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies (the forerunner of the modern Arts Society) during which time she founded the Church Recording Group, dedicated to recording the contents of Anglican churches in England. Ann spent 19 years supporting Guildford Cathedral, becoming honorary Curator of the Cathedral, and 32 years as a member of the Worshipful Company of Barbers and, like John, being made a Freeman of the Company. Closer to Barts, for 23 years until 2018, Ann served on the committee of the Hospital Archives Department and, if all that wasn't enough, somewhere along the way Ann even found time to be appointed as an Honorary Porter of Spitalfields Market!

However, it is for her exceptional service to the Guild that we give Ann particular thanks. Some of you will remember what seems like the long distant past when England achieved its only victory in the football World Cup, but 1966 was the year when Ann first joined the Guild, meaning she has given an incredible 59 years of continuous service. During that time, Ann served three terms over 14 years as a member of the Management Committee, two terms over 7 years as Chairman, 13 continuous years as a Vice-President and the last 17 years as President.



Ann (standing) enjoys a joke with Julie prior to the start of the AGM.

Photograph: Bob Cooper

In 2022, Ann started Barts Guild Crafts, which involves knitting, sewing and making other handworks to sell in the Guild Shop. Amazingly, this all adds up to Ann having served for 51 years in various senior roles for the Guild.

Very appropriately and being hugely deserved, such dedicated service has been rightly recognised with some very prestigious awards.

In 2016, Ann was awarded The League of Mercy Medal in recognition of 50 years of voluntary service, and four years later she was made a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Nurses.



Ann's Porter's badge

Ann received the ultimate accolade in 2023 when she was awarded the British Empire Medal for her charitable work at St Bartholomew's and the community in London, in His Majesty King Charles III's first honours list after his succession.

It seems fitting that we should also recognise Ann's contribution and, after consultation with the President Elect and Vice-Chairman, we are delighted to confer Honorary Life Membership of the Guild and, without precedent, the title of President Emerita of Barts Guild.

STEPHEN EDMONDSON
Guild Chairman

Ann's life away the Guild in pictures

We're used to seeing photographs of our new President Emerita in her official Guild capacity, but we wanted to share some memories from Ann Wickham's life away from the Guild.



School photo, 1947.



Hastings with her sister, 1948.



Nurse, 1962.



Ann & John's wedding, 1961.



Outside her Welsh childhood home.



Family photo with John, three daughters, husbands and children.



Surprise party after October's AGM with her grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Christmas Shopping

Postage may be expensive nowadays but the Guild's Christmas cards are still a bargain at £3.50 or £4 for a pack of 10. There are eight designs available from the Guild Shop or our online store.



If you need inspiration to help tick off your Christmas list, visit the Shop in the atrium of the KGV Building at Barts or browse online for books, cosy sweatshirts and stocking fillers galore.

bartsguild.org.uk/souvenir-store

Celebrate Christmas in style!

A CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS 2025

Wednesday December 3rd, 7pm for 7.30pm

Tickets – £16 or £8 for OAPs and Guild volunteers – include a glass of wine or soft drink and a mince pie

We're delighted that our traditional 'A Celebration of Christmas' evening, which commences the Guild's Christmas festivities, returns for the first time in 3 years to the magnificent Great Hall at Barts following the restoration of the North Wing.

The Barts and The London Music Society, mostly formed of Barts medical and dental students who share a passion for music, will entertain us with their eclectic mix of choral and instrumental music alongside chosen readings and much-loved festive carols.

Tickets are now on sale in the Guild Shop, atrium of the KGV Building at Barts, or via our online store.



The last 'A Celebration of Christmas' took place in December 2022.

Photograph: Bob Cooper

Tickets purchased online before November 25th will be posted out, with any ordered after that date available for collection on the door on the evening of the concert with proof of ID.

We look forward to seeing you back in the Great Hall at the beginning of December for an enjoyable evening to commence your Christmas celebrations!

Guild Calendar 2026



**Barts Guild Calendar
2026**



The Princess Alice Garden



Friends of St Bartholomew's Hospital since 1911
PATRON: HRH THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER KG GCVO

An attractive calendar is something everyone needs and the Guild Calendar 2026 (front cover left, back cover right) features 12 photographs of our Princess Alice Garden through the seasons taken by Guild volunteer Neil Ritson.

There are two versions available in store or online – the desktop costs just £1.50 and the wall version is yours for just £2.

A great gift for a modest price!



Founded in 1823 St Bartholomew's Hospital has been the home of the Princess Alice Garden since the early 1900s when the management of the garden was undertaken by the Duke.

In 1992, the garden was officially named The Princess Alice Garden in honour of the Duke's mother, HRH Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester OBE GCVO GBE and in celebration of her 100th birthday.

Following consultation with the Guild's current patron, HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO, a major redevelopment of the garden was undertaken in 2019 to the site led by the renowned landscape designer Lady Mary Kerr. The garden was then re-opened by The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester in September of that year.

During further refurbishment work in the summer of 2023, a hidden 18th century crypt was discovered containing iron coffins and various artefacts. The redeveloped garden remains unseen, consequently these discoveries add a layer of historical intrigue to the garden. A stone plaque marks the entrance to the crypt.

Tales commemorating the life of the eminent Barts surgeon, John Whiston and loyal Guild member and former Princess Lady Alice Kerr, together with various historical commemorative notices, will inspire all who visit the garden. Additionally, a plaque with a Latin inscription is there to provide inspiration and encourage reflection.

The courtesy of Patrick T. Jennings, Guild Treasurer and former Chairman

Thank you for supporting Barts Guild by purchasing our 2025 calendar. If you would like to discuss, please consider supporting us in other ways. Volunteering, becoming a Guild Member, making a donation or leaving a legacy to your will are all ways you can help. For more information, please contact us:

via our website at www.bartsguild.org.uk

or email us at contact@bartsguild.org.uk

or email us at contact@bartsguild.org.uk

All photographs by Guild Treasurer Neil Ritson 2025

Penny Wainwright

My first link with Barts was in the 1950s when my father, Dr Laurence Cartledge, was an ophthalmic surgeon at the Hospital. But if it hadn't been for an extraordinary coincidence years later, I might never have made contact with the Guild, as sadly my father died from a brain tumour in 1956.

The coincidence, in 2011, involved a former Barts nurse, Jean Kay, who had cared for my father just before he died. She spotted a Christmas card from my mother at a friend's house and recognised the name. So, Jean and I became friends and I was thus reconnected with Barts!

[Jean Kay's story was published in Issue 23 of BGN, May 2024]

I didn't follow my father into medicine; instead, after graduating from the University of Exeter with a BSc in Botany and Zoology, I worked as a sub-editor for the trade press, followed by the Institution of Civil Engineers, Cosmopolitan magazine and a small book publisher.

(Contact with the Hospital was unexpectedly, and briefly, revived in 1978 when Martin, my husband-to-be, was knocked off his motorbike a week after we had become engaged. Realising he had broken his leg, he was reassured to realise the accident had happened within a stone's throw from Barts where – naturally! – he made a complete recovery.)

Martin's job took us from London to Leeds, by this time with two small boys, where we lived for nearly thirty years. Between the usual demands of family life, I wrote pieces for Yorkshire Life magazine, a history of the Leeds surgical instrument makers, Thackray's (now DePuy Synthes), became a trustee of the Thackray Museum of Medicine and also the Hepworth Gallery in Wakefield, was elected to sit on the council of Leeds Phil & Lit, and worked with the elderly as a volunteer.



*Penny before the start of the AGM.
Photograph: Bob Cooper*

Retirement brought us back south to be nearer our sons and grandchildren. In 2016, realising it was 60 years since my father had died, I wanted to do something in his memory; that led me to provide some modest grants for students' elective studies which is what brought me in touch with the Guild. President Ann Wickham and other Trustees were very welcoming and our friendship over the past ten years or so led to my being nominated for the role as the Guild's new President.

Having read Ann's excellent history, I am all too aware of the myriad things the Guild has contributed to the Hospital over the years and also of Ann's tireless involvement. I feel honoured to be taking on her role and hope to do both her and the job justice.

PENNY WAINWRIGHT
Guild President

The Guild's top model

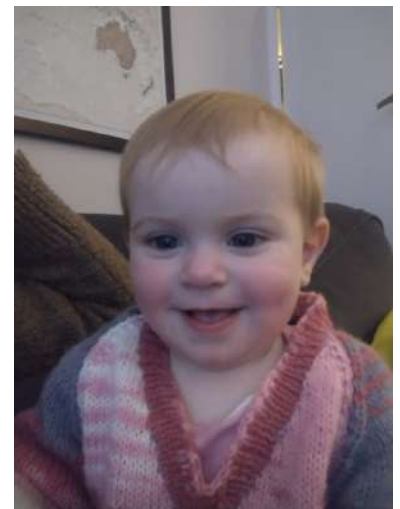
Geraldine, a Pharmacist at Barts, has been a regular customer in the Guild Shop and has, over the last few years, bought a number of hand-knitted jumpers for her granddaughter.

Dotty loves her Barts woolies and looks very stylish in them. Chloe, Dotty's mother, has shared some pictures of her daughter looking every inch a junior fashionista.

If you have a baby or toddler to please, do take a look at the wonderful handmade clothing and toys in the Guild Shop.

These items are donated by the wonderful Barts Crafters, who have a remarkable range of skills from crochet and knitting to tatting and creating greetings cards.

The lovely things sell fast but new stock arrives frequently. Every penny of the sale price helps the Guild's charitable work and we are grateful to the Crafters for their skill and generosity.



Photographs: Chloe Manley

If you're a dab hand in the 'craft zone' and have some spare time to become one of our Barts Crafters, we'd love to hear from you.

Please drop us an email – contact@bartsguild.org.uk – or pop in to the Guild Shop at Barts.

AGM 2025



*Ann addressing the AGM.
Photograph: Bob Cooper*



*Lady Mayoress receives her bouquet.
Photograph: Bob Cooper*



*David Meara and Ann.
Photograph: Neil Ritson*



*David delivering his illustrated talk.
Photograph: Bob Cooper*



*(L-R) Jean Stevenson with our new Trustees
Alex Shipolini, Claire Rathwell (partially hidden),
and Heather Byers.
Photograph: Neil Ritson*



*Lesley (standing) with Helen (seated R) and
her guest Celia (seated L), a former student
technician in anaesthetics at Barts.
Photograph: Bob Cooper*

AGM 2025



*(L-R) David Meara, Ann and Steve.
Photograph: Bob Cooper*



*Jenny (left) and Helen.
Photograph: Bob Cooper*



*Ann and Margaret rise to the occasion.
Photograph: Bob Cooper*



*Calendars, cards and concert tickets in demand.
Photograph: Bob Cooper*



*Roll up for the raffle.
Photograph: Bob Cooper*

Chairman's Annual Report

The Chairman's report was delivered at the 2025 AGM.

I am honoured to be delivering my first annual report as Chairman and to be doing so at our first meeting in the newly refurbished Great Hall, which you will have accessed by the very impressive Hogarth Stair.

I offer my congratulations to Will Palin and the Barts Heritage team who have done such an amazing job with firstly the fundraising to make all this possible and then for overseeing such a brilliant restoration, which has achieved the difficult combination of very visible renewal whilst preserving the sense of history and occasion in this very special place.

We are also grateful to Will and Barts Heritage for providing us with use of this exceptional venue for our AGM but also for our forthcoming Christmas concert as well as use of the North Wing more widely for our future Guild meetings. This is not entirely a one-way relationship and you will see in the entrance and inside the Great Hall acknowledgement to the Guild of our contribution towards the refurbishment.

By a happy coincidence the guest of honour at the reopening of the Great Hall on October 9th was HRH The Duke of Gloucester who, like his mother before him, is patron of the Guild.

It was a great honour that your President, Vice-Chairman, Patrick Jennings and myself were hosted for tea at Kensington Palace in June this year. His Royal Highness is both very knowledgeable and takes a great interest in the affairs of the Guild and in particular the Princess Alice Garden, named in honour of his mother.

It is our return to the Great Hall and North Wing which sets the tone for my report to you today as one of refresh and renewal, which you may recall I undertook to work on when I took over from Chris Hayward as Chairman at last year's AGM.



Steve delivering his report.

Photograph: Bob Cooper

I can reassure you this will not be a revolution but an evolution, focussing on two main aspects of the Guild's work. Firstly, looking to reinvigorate the longstanding association between the Guild and the Hospital and secondly, being able to adapt when necessary to the changes happening around us such that we maintain and enhance our *raison d'être* and ability to support the Hospital, its staff, patients, carers and wider community in the tradition that has stood us in great stead for the past 114 years.

To this end I have already mentioned building on our strong and renewed relationship with Barts Heritage.

Continued on page thirteen.

Chairman's Annual Report cont.

I have also had meetings with Charles Knight, Barts CEO and a strong supporter of the Guild, as the start of what I anticipate will be an ongoing engagement to look at possible ways to be more creative with our grant giving.

This could include supporting specific Hospital projects that will in turn bring more recognition to the role of the Guild and foster a virtuous cycle of grant giving, promoting membership and potentially donations to the Guild which we rely on to do our good works. This will be to compliment and not replace our existing grant giving portfolio, which has been expertly managed by Hilary Tarr and our Grants Committee for a number of years.

We do need to consider, for example, the almost inevitable change that will happen to our relationship with Barts and the London medical students as their affiliation moves to Queen Mary University of London, with potential loss of the specific Barts student identity.

I could give other examples, not least of which are the extraordinarily challenging financial constraints under which Barts and the wider NHS is now operating, which will provide opportunities for us to support in ways we may not have considered before. For example, we could propose offering a small number of competitive Guild travelling fellowships to newly qualified Barts doctors or newly appointed Barts consultants.

In the refresh context I also want to mention our sister charities that also do great works for the Hospital's staff and patients. I am referring to The Rahere Association and The Voluntary Board of St Bartholomew's Hospital, which are in the process of merging to form a single charity, The St Bartholomew's Hospital Charitable Fund.

At his invitation I met recently with Martin Webster, who is currently the Chair of the Voluntary Board and Chair-elect of the newly formed charity. We had a very amicable conversation and were pleasantly surprised to

realise that we are very largely complimentary with different areas of focus for our grant giving. Neither charity engages significantly in fundraising and there is therefore no source of potential conflict there either.

We agreed that we would continue to engage in a complimentary and coordinated way but also look to identify opportunities where we could be mutually supportive.

As part of the renewal, I want to extend a warm welcome to our three new Trustees – Heather Byers (Associate Director of Nursing, Barts Heart Centre), Claire Rathwell (Consultant in Cardiothoracic Anaesthesia and Critical Care, and Clinical Lead for Anaesthesia at Barts), and Alex Shipolini (Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon at Barts) – whom I know will bring their expertise to our work and who have already made significant contributions over the past year as members of our Management Committee.

None of this, of course, detracts from our constant search for new members and volunteers to support the Guild across the many facets of our activities and despite the recruitment of my colleagues with offsetting resignations we do need to increase our Trustee numbers and now with more non-medical appointments.

I now turn to my round of thanks to so many of you that make the Guild the successful and admired institution it is today.

Firstly, I would like to thank our outgoing Trustees and Management Committee members Julia Briscoe, Dawn Wright and Hilary Tarr, whose much appreciated contributions I have covered in my Chairman's letter (see the Annual Report).

I must however make a special mention of Hilary Tarr who, apart from my wife, is probably the woman I have spent most time either being or corresponding with over the past year.

Continued on page fourteen.

Chairman's Annual Report cont.

Hilary's roles have included, but are no means restricted to, serving as Bookkeeper, Deputy Honorary Treasurer, Chair of our Grants Committee and preparer of the Annual Report, as well as two terms as a Trustee and many other contributions to the Guild, which has been frankly extraordinary. This is to the extent that our last Management Committee meeting actually had an agenda item that could have been entitled 'What will we do without Hilary?'

Thankfully, to spare her blushes, Hilary was on leave elsewhere, but Jean Stevenson (Vice-Chairman) and myself have met separately with Hilary to work out how best to cover the myriad of roles Hilary has been fulfilling.

I am pleased and relieved to say that Hilary will be making a transitional exit from the Guild and we will have the benefit of Hilary's support during that time. We therefore offer our enormous gratitude to Hilary for everything she has done and wish her all the very best for what I think we can call Hilary's second retirement.

I also want to make a special mention and express my personal and your thanks to Keith Bottomley who graciously continued in his Honorary Treasurer and Trustee role for a year longer than he planned, but is now with our resounding thanks stepping down from the Guild after this AGM. Keith has served us exceptionally as our Honorary Treasurer, Trustee and Vice-Chairman over 8 years. We also extend our many congratulations to Keith who was voted unopposed to become Sheriff of the City of London, an office he has already commenced and will no doubt fulfil with great distinction.

Next, I wish to say very great and heartfelt thanks to my fellow Trustees, Management Committee members and managers who do an absolutely brilliant job in keeping the Guild running smoothly. They cover multiple roles, including serving on our various sub-committees which often goes unnoticed, but is an awful lot of hard work for which we are very grateful.

They know who they are and what they do but particular thanks also to Julie Pearce, our Honorary Secretary, and Lizzie Clark who have done the heavy lifting in preparation for this AGM and our regular management meetings, for which I am most grateful, and I'd also like to thank Jan O'Neill, Lesley Evans, Wendy Mead, Neil Ritson, Steve Bench, Patrick Jennings, Andy Haddon and Phil Moss.

I do however want to especially thank my deputy and Vice-Chairman, Jean Stevenson, who joined the Guild at the same time as me. Jean has proved to be an exemplary deputy and colleague to whom I am extremely grateful for her support and wise counsel. Jean does a great deal behind the scenes and I think we have found a *modus operandi* that is complimentary and works very well for the good of the Guild.

My final and very special thanks go to all our volunteers without whom the vital and what I regard as core functions of the Guild would not be possible. These, of course, are our Shop and Trolley Service, which give us the visibility and a special place in the hearts and minds of our staff and patients.

As you have heard from our Honorary Treasurer we are in good financial health, the Shop and Trolley Service continue to thrive and we have had another year of very positive grant giving. It is my honour and privilege to continue to serve as your Chairman.

STEPHEN EDMONDSON
Guild Chairman



New Look for Ward 4A

We were pleased to award a grant to Ward 4A to improve both staff wellbeing and patient experience. Ward manager Jermie had requested a new sofa, table and chairs set and microwave in the staff room to create a comfortable and restorative environment for nurses who care for cardiac patients. The staff room is not large so careful measuring took place to ensure optimal use of the space where nurses can rest and recharge, directly enhancing wellbeing, morale, and retention in a demanding clinical area. Here, a highly skilled and dedicated nursing team is required to deliver complex post-operative care in a fast-paced environment.

For patients, the grant funded the purchase of bedside reusable signage panels to show the patient's name, name of consultant, nurse and healthcare assistant with space on the panel for other information, all to support the patient's reorientation following surgery. The panels serve to designate the patient's own space, and the names of the team demonstrate a commitment to personal attention.

Great excitement followed the news of the grant award and within a few weeks, all the



items had been received, assembled and were in use. The panels were fixed in place and we trust that patients and staff are finding them to be a useful asset. The Guild has received fulsome thanks from Jermie and ward staff who had initially been kept in the dark about the impending upgrade of facilities. They seem to enjoy their breaks and, so we are told, keep saying that the staff room is too comfortable and the sofa is far too inviting! The photo of the team shows their clear appreciation.

HILARY TARR



bartsguild.org.uk/grants

Reopening of the North Wing

On October 6th, 2025 the doors of the Barts North Wing were finally reopened after nearly 2 years of restoration work. The £9.5m 'Sharing Historic Barts' project, supported by a major grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, has involved the meticulous repair and conservation of this Grade-I listed building.

Guild members may recall that for 6 months the building site was opened for public tours (hard hats and safety boots provided), allowing visitors to get up close and personal to the conservation works via a high-level scaffold deck.

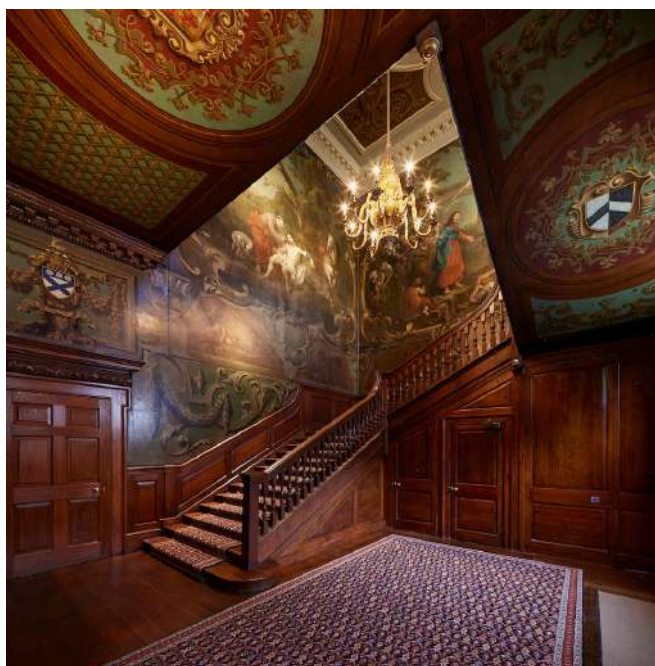
Now at last the results of that work can be admired from ground level, with the beautiful ceiling of the Great Hall glowing afresh, the donor boards legible once more, and the Charter Window resplendent. Likewise, the Hogarth Stair, for so long cluttered with scaffolding is now transformed, with the beautifully cleaned paintings brought to life by a new lighting scheme.

The aim of the capital project was to recapture the magic of the North Wing – to revive its splendour – without making our repairs and interventions too obvious. This involved hundreds of small changes, from the decorative treatment of walls and ceiling of the hall to the installation of new systems to heat and light these complex spaces.



The façade of the restored North Wing.

Photograph: Phil Moss



The magnificent Hogarth Stair and chandelier.

Photograph: Matthew Andrews

And, hidden from view, were those vital roof works and structural repairs to put the building in good order and safeguard its future. As ever with a project of this size and complexity it is the little details which can give the most satisfaction.

Outside there is the restored clock face, and the rainwater hoppers with the freshly gilded Barts shields. The railings, which for over a year lived in a workshop in Blackheath have returned lovingly repaired – and wonderfully smart in their new dark-green livery. Inside, the darkened panelling and floor help establish the atmosphere of a grand 18th-century space and, on the staircase, there is the Axminster carpet which looks like it has always been there.

Continued on page seventeen.

Reopening of the North Wing cont.

Visitors to the North Wing can now get under the skin of the building with our new information paddles hanging on stands throughout the historic spaces. There are multimedia guides too and regular tours from our brilliant team of volunteers. The idea is that you can come for an hour or for a minute – enjoying a deep dive into the history or a momentary burst of joy from the beauty of the spaces.

We are very proud of what we have achieved at the North Wing and hugely grateful to all our supporters – of which Barts Guild is one. We are also indebted to the dozens of skilled specialists who have helped to nurse this special building back to life – under the direction of our architects, Purcell, and our contractors Coniston. It has been a happy project, not least thanks to the patience and help of our stakeholders – the Hospital, Maggie's, QMUL and Nuffield.

We needed to ensure that our scaffolding trucks did not impede ambulances or affect vulnerable patients, and Coniston achieved this through excellent communications and planning – just one example of how everyone involved in the project went 'above and beyond' to make it a success.

Barts North Wing is open on Mondays and Tuesdays, 10am to 4pm, and the first Sunday of each month. Admission is free.

bartsnorthwing.org.uk

WILL PALIN
Chief Executive, Barts Heritage



The shield on our 18th-century railings being decorated and re-gilded as the TV cameras (for a new documentary on the Hospital) look on.

Photograph: Will Palin



The resplendent Great Hall (above) and Hogarth Stair, now open to the public for the first time.

Photographs: Matthew Andrews



Will Palin interview

As the 'Sharing Historic Barts' project neared completion of the first phase of works, Will Palin sat down with Phil Moss in the Square at Barts for an exclusive interview to discuss the project and his career. This excerpt begins when Will arrived at Barts, with the full interview available online.

Will joined Barts Heritage in 2019 “just before Covid – we had grand plans that we had to rethink quite quickly when the first lockdown happened” but hasn’t regretted a minute. “Barts had several attractions. Firstly, it was the North Wing itself. It’s a sensational building designed by James Gibbs, one of the most important architects of the eighteenth century; then there’s the Hogarth Stair – what can you say about that? Wonderful! – and also that it’s not well known, so it had a real appeal of somewhere that you could bring to wider public attention.

“The fact it was the City of London also appealed – I quite liked the idea of getting under the skin of the City a bit! – and there was also the Barts Health NHS Trust. They seemed to be prepared to let me do what I wanted, so that was probably the main thing because I was quite used to having a certain degree of control over what I did.”

Alongside the autonomy, the Hospital’s support was another key factor in Will’s decision to get onboard. “The Hospital has been brilliant and its chief executive, Charles Knight, couldn’t have been more supportive – he bought into the project, saw how important it was from the Hospital’s point of view, plus the 900th anniversary was approaching, and all those things together made the project really kind of work and attractive for me.”

When asked about some of the highlights of the project, Will’s eyes lit up. “It has been really wonderful when you clean the Hogarth Stair, when you clean the cornice, and you discover the quality of the original work and it comes back to life – the vibrancy and colour of the Hogarth’s [paintings] being revealed during cleaning was really quite moving.



*Will in front of the 'now gone' North Wing scaffolding.
Photograph: Phil Moss*

“Likewise, that beautiful plaster ceiling in the Great Hall, seeing that meticulously repaired and getting close to the undulating slight imperfections that reflect the hand of a human being on those original plaster details, was a really quite powerful experience, one which you can’t see from ground floor – you have to get up there – so I loved all that.

“We called the project ‘Sharing Historic Barts’ because we wanted to open up the building, to give a higher degree of public access, and to put the building to better use in terms of the community, the Hospital, and around the Hospital as well.

“There’ll be new information in the rooms, you’ll be able to see the Hogarth’s in their splendour, properly lit, and there’ll be other organised tours and things taking place. On the other days of the week, we’ll continue our wellbeing programme and they’ll be concerts and cultural activities which’ll be ticketed, and there will be the opportunity for private hire because that will provide the revenue needed to sustain the building.

“There’s potentially another phase of works involving the Museum and Archive spaces, so we’re looking at that. We want to build on the momentum of this first project to continue with these works.”

bartsguild.org.uk/will-palin

Frank Barrie 1936 - 2025

Readers will be sad to learn that Frank Barrie died this summer. Frank, an actor of distinction, had become a regular part of the Guild's Christmas festivities. Always charming and debonaire, Frank gave readings (pictured) which delighted audiences at several 'A Celebration of Christmas' concerts.

Frank's passion for theatre began at the tender age of four when he was entranced by a performance of *Chattanooga Cho-Cho* at a variety theatre in his home city of York. He began his acting career in his teens by securing a role at his local Rep by simply asking for a job, luckily, when a replacement actor was urgently needed.

Following graduation from Hull University, Frank's career blossomed. He played many leading roles in Shakespeare and classic comedies and wrote and performed a one-man

show - *Macready*. Tours in Britain and all over the world were very much a part of Frank's life.

Frank also appeared in films and on television, including roles in *Howard's Way*, *Murder in Suburbia* and *EastEnders*, in which he had a rather brief flirtation with Dot Cotton. Dot, a married woman with a fully functioning moral compass, soon gave her would be lover his marching orders feeling that his conduct was very wrong.

Frank is survived by his wife Mary and their daughter, actress Julia Barrie. We offer them our sincere and heartfelt condolences.

Thank you, Frank, for finding time for the Guild. You will be missed, especially at Christmas time.

JAN O'NEILL



Photographs: Bob Cooper



The President, President Emerita, Chairman and all at Barts Guild wish you a very Happy Christmas and hope that 2026 will bring health and happiness to you, your family and friends.



Barts Guild



St Bartholomew's Hospital
West Smithfield
London EC1A 7BE



+44 (0)20 3765 8700
contact@bartsguild.org.uk



www.bartsguild.org.uk



BartsHospitalGuild



@bartsguild.bsky.social



@bartsguild



@bartsguild

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

A Celebration of Christmas

Wednesday December 3rd, 2025
7pm for 7.30pm

Great Hall, North Wing at Barts



Please see page seven for further information and booking details. *Photograph: Matthew Andrews*

BARTS GUILD NEWS

Editor: Jan O'Neill Design/Typesetting: Phil Moss Printing: L&T Press Ltd., London

Published by The Guild of the Royal Hospital of St Bartholomew © 2025