

THE MASTER'S BLOG 25

BART'S VIEW DAY: WEDNESDAY 9 MAY 2018

Founded by prior Rahere in 1123, Saint Bartholomew the Great is one of London's oldest churches and has been in continuous use since at least 1143. Rahere also founded the adjoining hospital (St Barts) and View Day at St Bartholomew's Hospital has been held every year since 1551 as a way of acknowledging achievement, reflecting on the past and looking to the future.



This afternoon I join many other Livery Masters and those involved in Barts Charity and Barts Heath NHS Trust for Choral Evensong in St Barts the Great after which the Masters process to the Great Hall of the Hospital for a reception and presentation about the excellent work which the charity does to support the work of the hospital. In the last year, the Barts Charity has awarded an incredible £28.5 million to new projects.

One of the projects which has been funded is the provision of two state-of-the-art robots which greatly increase the number of surgeries completed using minimally invasive procedures. The advantages to patients of robotic surgery include reduced blood loss, reduced pain, reduced post-operative complications and shorter hospital stays.

Having descended the Hogarth staircase from the Great Hall, we are given guided tours of some of the projects which have been funded and I can report that the Master Plumber even had a shot of one of the robotic surgical devices. He can report some success (after 30 seconds of instruction) but also has to admit that had he been working on a live patient, he fears that his clumsiness might indeed have caused unnecessary pain. Stick to the day job, Master!

GUILDHALL SCHOOL GOLD MEDAL: THURSDAY 10 MAY 2018

The Guildhall School of Music and Drama is provided by the City of London Corporation as part of its contribution to the cultural life of London and the nation and it has a long history of producing world-class performers. The Gold Medal is competed for annually with singers competing in odd-numbered years and instrumentalists in the other years, including 2018. The programme shows us that it was awarded to Bryn Terfel in 1985, Max Jaffa in 1931, Jacqueline du Pre in 1960 and Tasmin Little in 1986.

Tonight, the Mistress and I, along with Past Master John Rae, enjoy a delightful evening of performances- piano concertos composed by Prokofiev and Brahms and the Sibelius Violin Concerto. Our seats offer us good views of the soloists and we all agree that it would be very difficult to determine which was the winner. Thankfully, that task rests with the panel of judges whose unanimous view is that the Gold Medal is awarded to Korean pianist Joon Yoon. This is an incredible and enjoyable evening of musicianship.

LIGHTMONGERS' CONSORTS' LUNCH: FRIDAY 11 MAY 2018

The Mistress travels to Tallow Chandlers' Hall on Dowgate Hill today for a Consorts' lunch hosted by the Consort of the Master of the Lightmongers' Company. Consort John Harding (who is himself a Past Master Lightmonger) welcomes his guests and after lunch there is an excellent presentation by Lesley Smith, Curator of Tutbury Castle, on the life of Queen Elizabeth I. The presentation, in



which Lesley dons the costume and character of the Queen, is both fascinating and educational.

INSTALLATION OF THE NEW BISHOP OF LONDON: SATURDAY 12 MAY 2018

New Bishops aren't installed too often and it is therefore a huge honour that we have been invited to attend the Installation today of the new Bishop of London, Dame Sarah Mullally. Bishop Sarah, who had an eminent nursing career (rising to the position of Chief Nursing Officer) before training for the Anglican ministry, is welcomed into the Cathedral after knocking three times on the Great West Door three times with her pastoral staff. She leaves, at the end of the service, through the same door to the sound of the St Michael and All Angels Steel Band from Brent.



The Livery Masters have excellent seats in the Quire area of the Cathedral beside the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, Aldermen, Judges and other eminent guests and Bishop Sarah sits on her throne in that same area for part of the proceedings. The congregational singing all but lifts the roof of Wren's iconic Cathedral and in her sermon, the new Bishop, the first female appointed to that role, talks of the challenges facing London and society in general today, including violent knife crime.

This is a special occasion, one of many highlights of our year so far, and it is followed by a reception in Guildhall.

THAMES TIDEWAY TUNNEL OPEN DAY: SUNDAY 13 MAY 2018

The Plumbers' Annual Lecture in 2016 was on the subject of the Thames Tideway Tunnel, a 16-mile-long structure which will bring Sir Joseph Bazalgette's 1860s sewer system up to a standard to meet the demands of London in the 21st century.



As our temporary base for our year in London is situated adjacent to one of the Tideway construction sites, we are pleased to have the opportunity today to attend an open day at which we can see, close up, the Tunnel Boring Machines (TBMs) which will play an integral role in constructing this major feat of engineering. It is a very interesting event and we see the machines (named "Ursula" and "Millicent") which have been pieced together just around the corner from the flat, having arrived in instalments on barges along the river. We are told that they are to be loaded into the large hole which has been created on the site before the end of May although tunnelling won't start until September. It is good to make the link today with the subject of a memorable Plumber's Lecture.