

President: Alderman Emma Edhem, Chairman: Laurence Johnstone,  
Treasurer: Stuart Somerville, Hon. Secretary: Murray Craig



THE CANDLEWICK WARD CLUB  
Founded 1670 Reconstituted 1739

## **THE WREN 300 YEAR THANKSGIVING SERVICE HELD AT ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL AND LUNCH AT PLAISTERERS' HALL - 27<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2023**

Some 20 Candlewick Ward Club members and guests attended the Wren 300 Service of Thanksgiving to celebrate the life of Sir Christopher Wren FRS held in the splendour of one - if not the greatest - of his masterpieces: St. Paul's Cathedral in the City of London.

Wren was an extraordinary and multi-talented genius. In the hope that this will be of interest to our Club's members, I have assembled an historical and biographical note as an Addendum to this article.

The Wren 300 ceremony was attended by a congregation of some 1500 which included Their Royal Highnesses the Duke & Duchess of Gloucester, The Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London, the Bishop of London, the Dean of St Paul's, members of a number of Livery Companies and guests as well as members of the public.

The event was jointly organised by the Surveyors' and Architects' Livery Companies in collaboration with many other sponsors including M & G Real Estate, the Constructors', Paviers' and Wax Chandlers' Liveries and the real estate data service providers LandClan.

Our members and their guests were fortunate to have been afforded seats under the Dome of St Pauls to witness the Service unfolding.

The ceremony included a feast of prayers, hymns and uplifting music together with addresses and tributes delivered by Loyd Grossman, Chair of Gresham College; James Bryer, Master of the Surveyors' Livery; Christopher Dyson, Master of the Architects' Livery; Ann Grey, President of the RICS; and The Revd. Dr Prof. Maxwell Hutchison, a Past President of the RIBA. Prayer Readers included students of St Saviours' and St Olave's School.

After the Service, our members and guests attended a most convivial champagne reception and lunch at Plaisterers' Hall with toasts and speeches given by the Master Pavior, John May and the Master Plaisterer, Stephen Gilbert.

This event was a very memorable and impressive occasion - thank you to all of the organisers and sponsors and of course to our own Chairman and Hon. Secretary for initiating and arranging our Club's participation.

**Candlewick Ward Club Member - Patricia Newton RIBA**

## **ADDENDUM**

### **THE LIFE AND WORK OF SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN FRS (1632 -1723)**

*Under the great Dome of St. Pauls, we can see the zenith of Wren's creative genius...*

*"Reader, if you seek his memorial – look around you" (Wren's epitaph)*

Sir Christopher Wren was an English architect, astronomer, mathematician and physicist who was one of the most highly acclaimed architects in the history of England.

Known for his work in the English Baroque style, he was accorded responsibility for rebuilding 52 churches in the City of London after the Great Fire in 1666, including what is regarded as his masterpiece, St Paul's Cathedral, on Ludgate Hill and completed in 1710.

Wren was born in 1632 in East Knoyle in Wiltshire, the only surviving son of Christopher Wren the Elder (1589–1658) and Mary Cox, the only child of the Wiltshire squire Robert Cox from Fonthill Bishop. Christopher Sr. was, at that time, the rector of East Knoyle and - later - Dean of Windsor.

After his father's royal appointment as Dean of Windsor in March 1635, his family spent part of each year there, but little is known about Wren's life at Windsor. He spent his first eight years at East Knoyle and was educated by the Rev. William Shepherd, a local clergyman.

Some of Wren's youthful exercises preserved or recorded (though few are datable) showed that he received a thorough grounding in Latin and also learned to draw.

On 25 June 1650, Wren entered Wadham College, Oxford, where he studied Latin and the works of Aristotle. After receiving his MA in 1653, Wren was elected a fellow of All Souls' College in the same year and began an active period of research and experiment in Oxford.

His days as a fellow of All Souls ended when he was appointed Professor of Astronomy at Gresham College, London, in 1657. Wren continued to meet the men with whom he had frequent discussions in Oxford. They attended his London lectures and in 1660, initiated formal weekly meetings. It was from these meetings that the Royal Society, England's premier scientific body, was to develop.

In 1661, Wren was elected Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford, and in 1669 he was appointed Surveyor of Works to Charles II.

It was probably around this period, 1665 – 1723, that Sir Christopher Wren was drawn into redesigning a battered St Paul's Cathedral.

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Making a trip to Paris in 1665, Wren studied architecture, which had reached a climax of creativity, and perused the drawings of Bernini, the great Italian sculptor and architect, who himself was visiting Paris at the time.

Returning from Paris, Wren made his first design for St Paul's. A week later, however, the Great Fire destroyed two-thirds of the City. Wren submitted his plans for rebuilding the city to King Charles II, although they were never adopted. With his appointment as King's Surveyor of Works in 1669, he had a presence in the general process of rebuilding the City, but was not directly involved with the rebuilding of houses or companies' halls.

Although Wren was personally responsible for the rebuilding of 51 churches, it is not necessarily true to say that each of them represented his own fully developed design.

Wren was knighted on 14 November 1673. This honour was bestowed on him after his resignation from the Savilian chair in Oxford, by which time he had already begun to make his mark as an architect, both in services to the Crown and in playing an important part in rebuilding London after the Great Fire.

Although he was appointed to the Fifty New Churches Commission in 1711, Wren was left only with nominal charge of a board of works when the surveyorship started in 1715. On 26 April 1718, on the pretext of failing powers, he was dismissed in favour of William Benson.

Wren was laid to rest on 5 March 1723. His body was placed in the southeast corner of the crypt of St Paul's.

There is a memorial to him in the crypt at St Paul's Cathedral beside those of his daughter Jane, his sister Susan Holder, and her husband William. The plain stone plaque was written by Wren's eldest son and heir, Christopher Wren the Younger.

The inscription, which is also inscribed in a circle of black marble on the main floor beneath the centre of the dome, reads:

***"Here in its foundations lies the architect of this church and city, Christopher Wren, who lived beyond ninety years, not for his own profit but for the public good. Reader, if you seek his monument – look around you. Died 25 Feb. 1723, age 91."***