

WREN | 300

SQUARE MILE CHURCHES

Year-long *Wren300* celebration announced

Project will be supported by £241,000 grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund



2023 marks three hundred years since the death of Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723) - mathematician, astronomer, physicist, anatomist and one of the United Kingdom's greatest architects.

Wren was given responsibility for rebuilding 51 churches in the City of London after the Great Fire in 1666, including what is regarded as his masterpiece, St Paul's Cathedral, where today he is buried under a gravestone with the Latin inscription which in part translates: *'If you seek his memorial, look about you.'* From centres of learning in Greenwich, Oxford and Cambridge, churches and palaces fit for a king, Wren's influence spans the centuries.

His tercentenary will be marked in the Square Mile Churches by a year-long education and conservation programme for children and adults which has been awarded a £241,000 grant by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Throughout 2023, Wren's remaining churches in The City will host a variety of school and community initiatives, marking the enduring legacy of one of Britain's most acclaimed polymaths.

With projects including school pupils building a replica of the dome of St Paul's, and a 'Wrenathon' of choirs across The City of London, the *Wren300* Square Mile Churches programme offers a range of opportunities to explore the work of Sir Christopher Wren through conservation, heritage, and musical activities.

The *Wren300* projects include:

- **The Schools' Programme:** Working with the London Diocesan Board of Schools, Temple Bar Trust and the London Fire Brigade Museum, primary school children will have the opportunity to visit Wren

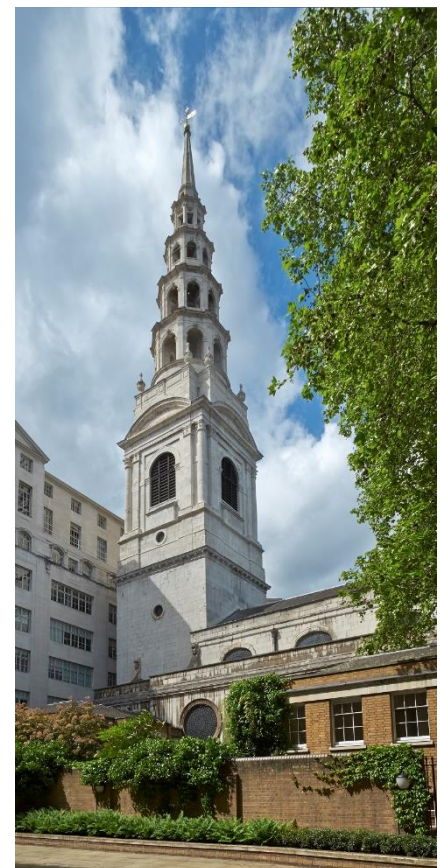
churches throughout 2023. The programme will be open to all state schools, with almost 5,000 pupils expected to take part in these trips, focused on London's most under-privileged areas.

- **Conservation Workshop:** A series of workshops, talks and events on new construction techniques and sustainable construction materials, inspired by Wren's work, run by Cliveden Conservation Workshop.
- **The 'Dastardly' Triple Dome:** Taking place during School Science Week in March 2023 and led by Chris Wise, Senior Director of Expedition Engineering, this project will involve 100 secondary school pupils coming together to build a mini dome using foam blocks and bamboo, representing the triple dome of St Paul's Cathedral.
- **A City Full of People:** Led by historians, Dr Rebecca Preston and Dr Susan Skedd, this programme will engage and recruit volunteers from diverse communities in researching and understanding the lives of people engaged with Wren's churches over the centuries, who might previously have been overlooked.
- **The Wrenathon:** Working with Music in Offices, work-based, community, and intergenerational choirs, drawn from diverse communities, including The Samaritans Choir and Ukrainian Refugees Choir, will come together in Wren churches. to sing music ranging from baroque and classical to contemporary and jazz.
- **Exhibitions of fire artists:** From September 2023, a number of churches will be hosting exhibitions of fire artists, depicting the destruction and rebuilding of Wren churches.

Alongside a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Wren300 has also received grants from the Royal Academy of Engineering, The Linbury Trust and the London Fire Brigade Museum.

Commenting on *Wren300*, the Bishop of London, the Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally, said: *"We are very grateful for the funding the Wren300 project has received from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This will go a long way to helping those from all backgrounds to experience Wren's churches in The City, encouraging new audiences to feel inspired by the architecture, heritage, arts and music of his time."*

Stuart McLeod, Director England - London & South at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, added: *"We are delighted to support this project, which, thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, will enable more people to learn about the fantastic legacy of Sir Christopher Wren. His work is so integrated into the community and bringing this to life through a year-long programme will be a fitting legacy. Heritage has a huge role to play in instilling pride in our communities and through Wren300 more people will be able to get involved with, protect, and learn about the exciting heritage right on their doorstep."*



Annie Hampson, Chair of the Wren300-Square Mile Churches, said: *“Wren300 is a celebration of an extraordinary and prolific career that occurred at a changing point in British history and transformed our architecture. The Great Fire of London decimated the City and Wren brought his pragmatism and skill to the rebuilding of the City Churches, providing him with the expertise and knowledge to achieve his greatest masterpiece in the rebuilding of St Paul’s. The Wren300 project provides a range of activities that will ensure these Churches are better known and appreciated, that they are an enriching experience to all who come to them, a learning resource for young people living in and around the City of London and a lasting legacy that will ensure their survival for generations to come.”*

Wren300 Square Mile Churches, Honorary Patron, Lord Norman Foster of Thames Bank added *“Sir Christopher Wren was one of our greatest ever citizens. I admire him not only as a great architect but also as a surveyor and manager who remarkably came up with a plan for rebuilding the City only days after the Great Fire. What is even more extraordinary is that he succeeded in carrying it out, supervising the rebuilding of 51 churches, including St Paul’s Cathedral, where he used a completely new architectural language not previously seen in England. His influence continues to this day.”*

NOTES FOR EDITORS

The National Lottery Heritage Fund - Using money raised by the National Lottery, we Inspire, lead and resource the UK’s heritage to create positive and lasting change for people and communities, now and in the future. Since The National Lottery began in 1994, National Lottery players have raised over £43 billion for projects and more than 635,000 grants have been awarded across the UK. www.heritagefund.org.uk. Follow @HeritageFundUK on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and use #NationalLotteryHeritageFund

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