

Number 2 Winter 1995

Columns

The Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields
Registered Charity 276056

Columns is the supporter's bulletin for the Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields.

The Friends are leading the restoration of Nicholas Hawksmoor's church, regarded as one of the most important Baroque churches in Europe. This project will take several years.

Please support us by subscribing or making a donation. Use the coupon sent with this newsletter or telephone 0171-247 0165.

English Heritage backs the restoration campaign

A crucial first stage in the campaign for the restoration of Christ Church has now come to fruition. English Heritage have announced that they will give a total of £435,359 to assist the programme of restoration.

The grant, the largest ever given to help the restoration of any parish church, is due recognition of Christ Church's enormous significance. In the statement to the press issued when the grant was announced at the beginning of February, Roland Jeffery, the Campaign Director, expressed the delight felt by the Friends. 'The size of the grant surprised us, but Christ Church is not just important in the story of English 18th-century architecture; it is a key monument of the European Baroque of international importance. English Heritage have recognised this in the scale of their support.' Grants are made by English Heritage for major repairs to churches listed as Grade I or II*.



Christ Church in 1969, in a design by the late Gordon Cullen for the Hawksmoor Committee which included Sir John Betjeman, Lord and Lady Kennet, Kerry Downes and Ian Nairn

Since the grant proposed for Christ Church was of exceptional size, it was therefore referred to English Heritage Commissioners. Chief Executive Jenny Page signed the offer on her last day in post; she is now heading the Millenium Commission. English Heritage officers made several visits to Christ Church in assessing the application, which was greatly assisted by the steeplejacks' photographic survey commissioned by the Friends (and described in the previous issue of **Columns**). This showed the extent and nature of weathering and damage to the tower, and particularly to the steeple.

Although English Heritage have made such a considerable and generous offer, the grant is also an enormous challenge. As Roland Jeffery reminds all those interested in Christ Church's future, 'The government, through English Heritage, have offered **40** per cent of the costs of the structural repairs. We must find the remaining **60** per cent. The Diocese of London will help through the Stepney Area Fund. But we are looking to all the supporters of the Friends to do the rest.'

Sir James Stirling memorial

As announced in **Columns 1**, the west vestibule entrance doors to Christ Church will be restored to their original state in memory of the late Sir James Stirling. These works have started. Friends' Campaign Director Roland Jeffery said, 'The works will enhance the architecture of the vestibule, and they will be completed this spring. We are grateful to everyone who helped by sending donations.'

We list below the many individuals and bodies which have given so generously to the appeal. Those whose names appear in bold type donated more than £500. Among them, the former employees of James Stirling and Michael Wilford in Germany wrote that, with their memories of him in mind, they wished to contribute 'to keep but one of the many stones intact'.

Collection at the memorial service organized by
Lord Palumbo

Stirling, Wilford Architects London office
Mr Ashley Barker, Master of the Worshipful
Company of Architects

29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
Friends of the Geffrye Museum
the proceeds from the winding up of the
Hawksmoor Committee

The Richard Mariott Trust

Miss Hazel Wood's Charitable Trust

MacCormac Jamieson Pritchard Architects

'Jim's German colleagues', namely

Alexander Kolbe	Alois Albert
Annegret Burg	Hannelore Deubzer
Walter Nägeli	Hans-Georg Conradi
Hella Roffes	Jacques Thorin
Ludger Bands	Maria Rossi
Paul Panter	Pia Riegert
Mario Waltero	Renzo Valebuona
Siegfried Wernik	Volker Eich
Thomas Kemmermann	Bob Niess

The Warden & Fellows of All Souls' Coll. Oxford

Mr R. Rawlinson	Dr Gavin Stamp
Revd Janice White	Mr J. Kirkman
Mr W.R. McNabb	Mr Geoffrey Walton
Hall-McCartney Ltd	Mr M.L. Clarke
Mr H. Wilson	Mr H. Parker
Inscape Fine Art Tours	Ms A. Palmer
Ms D. Jeffs	Miss Winifred Gould
South Square Trust	Lady Bernard
The Mercer's Company	The Cromarty Trust
Mrs Y. Cheetham	Dr & Mrs D.E. Dolby
Ms W.E. Eccles	Mr W.T.J. Griffin

Mr Michael Gillingham	The Earl of Harewood
The Hon. Andrew Guest	Lord Henderson
Thomas Muirhead Architects	Miss J. Scott
Peter Carter Architects	Mr R. Pryor
Lawrence Bain	Dorothy Rowe
Marlies Hentrup	Norbert Heyens
The Manifold Trust	Mr & Mrs R. Jeffery
Koetter Kim Associates	Brian Henderson
and a number of anonymous donors	

If you wish to add a contribution to the memorial, please send your cheque to 'The Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields', indicating you wish it allocated to this project. The names of future donors will be recorded in **Columns**, and those who have given £100 or more will be invited to a supporters' reception after the completion of the works.

Thank You

The campaign to restore Christ Church relies on gifts of time, money and talents. Recently we have had cause to thank:

- Shearman & Sterling for the photocopying of this newsletter.
- Christies, the auctioneers, for distributing our appeals literature to 25,000 of their customers in the UK and USA.
- Liz Barraclough, Sibylle Luig, David Press and Kenneth Usher, our hard-working volunteers in the Campaign Office.
- Trustees of the Hawksmoor Committee, who have given their closing bank balances to the Friends, upon the winding up of the Committee. (See opposite.)

Wanted

- **Volunteers.** We need help in the Friends' office at Christ Church one day a week. We particularly welcome secretarial (WP) help.
- **Teas.** We need someone to organise teas at Friends' events.
- **Postage.** If your company can assist us by providing occasional postage facilities, please let us know.
- **Press cuttings.** We cannot afford to retain a press cuttings agency, so we rely on our Supporters to send us press and magazine articles. Anything about Hawksmoor and his buildings and, of course, about Christ Church itself, is of great interest. Cuttings tell us where we are attracting coverage and may be able to do so in the future. Please put the date and name of the publication in the margin if it is not on the cutting, and send it to us at the address on the foot of p.4.

Please telephone the Friends' office on 0171-247 0165 if you can help in these or any other ways.

The Friends look to Europe

Architectural heritage grants made annually by the European Union in Brussels are this year featuring 'Religious monuments', and the Friends have advanced Christ Church's strong case for grant support.

A different theme is chosen each year — last year theatres which are of architectural importance were assisted. The European Commission usually receives well over 500 applications from the 15 EU member nations, and each year 40-50 sites of international importance are helped. This year the odds will be even longer since the theme is expected to solicit an unusually high number of applications. The results will be announced by the adjudicating panel of international experts in late May.

The Hawksmoor Committee, and the Hawksmoor Group

The Hawksmoor Committee was founded in 1961 with the specific aim of reviving Nicholas Hawksmoor's reputation and rekindling appreciation of his buildings. They were not at the time concerned with raising funds for his buildings, but — when admirers were small in number — they took on the task of bringing his architecture before the public eye. We reported in the last issue the death of Vaughan Davies, a pioneer Hawksmoor enthusiast, but happily other members are still very much with us. The activities of the Committee have now been wound up, and their remaining assets have generously been given to the Friends' Appeal.

Meanwhile, the new Hawksmoor Group had its first meeting in January. This group of supporters comprises senior figures in the City of London, and aims to circulate appeal details within the City. Eric

Elstob, a Spitalfields resident and Friends' Treasurer, helped set the Group in motion at a reception with an address by Sir William Whitfield CBE, architect to the restoration.

Covenants and gifts

The Friends' Trustees are working to maximise the amount of statutory grant available, both from English Heritage and from Brussels, but the restoration also requires the help of countless individuals, trusts and companies. We are pleased to acknowledge all donations, so that donors know that their money which has been so kindly given arrived safely. We value donations large and small; without them we will not be able to achieve our ambitious objectives.

We wish to thank the following (listed in order of receipt) who have all made generous donations using a Deed of Covenant. This enables the Friends to reclaim a free bonus from the Inland Revenue *at no extra cost to the donors*. If you would like a covenant form, please telephone 0171-247 0165 and speak to us or leave a message.

Deirdre Munro	Hamish Parker
Charles C. Duff	Mrs B. Asprey
Mrs W.S. Holdham	Lord Fairhaven
Tad Williams	D.K. Robinson
Theo Clarke	Andrew Roberts
The Duke of Grafton	Elizabeth Pillar
Geraldine Fellows	Ms J. Dolby
Carol Blackett-Ord	Mr G. Brezje
S.M. Bate	Eileen Cressy
Sir John Riddell	J.C. Wolton
Hugh Wilson	Janet Te Thelma
Mrs P. Rosalind-Smart	Jean Sugden
Christine Raybould	Hilary Pearson
Anthony Pugh-Thomas	Dr Michael Glynn
Ms B.M. Gardner	Rev'd Donald Pateman
Mrs J. McQuade	Mrs Anne Jamieson
Mrs Amy Insall	Mrs J.M. Dereham
Lewis Beddison	Sir Martin Wedgwood

Burial Archaeology

The fascinating reports from the Council for British Archaeology on the excavations in Christ Church crypt are available at £24 each, or £45 for the pair, including p&p. Margaret Cox has now written a layman's version, which is likely to be available early summer at £15. Apply: CBA, Bowes Morrell Hse, 111 Walmgate, York YO1 2UA.

Personal Column

Pamela Tudor-Craig, Lady Wedgwood

Each issue includes a personal appreciation of Christ Church. We are grateful to the art historian and critic Pamela Tudor-Craig, whose work has commonly searched for mysticism and hidden meaning in art and architecture, for contributing.

Ever since Peter Ackroyd's novel *Hawksmoor* (1985) probed the abyss of squalor and desolation straddled by Nicholas Hawksmoor's monumental churches for east London, the shiver they have always sent through the mind has found a voice. Toppling prodigies of over-large elements within constricted sites, they are essentially Baroque — S. Andrea al Quirinale or S. Carlino alle Fontane — without the panache of Bernini or Borromini.

It is many years since I first sat on a straw bale in Christ Church while Peter Burman and his companions-at-arms fought for its restoration. I wondered then, in an Ackroyd/Stoppard crack in the facade of time, whether this was 1726, and that we were seeing Hawksmoor's giant order topped by anachronistic little arches before the galleries had tamed their relentless clash of scale, or whether 1866, and the dismantling of these galleries, was behind us. Were we at the birth or decline of this disturbing masterpiece?

Last summer, revisiting Christ Church for the Festival, I discovered that time was still poised here. We sat again on temporary seats, although more comfortable than straw bales, for another breathtaking work brilliantly performed: Britten's *Prodigal Son*. Should, I asked myself again, we anaesthetise this brilliant and weird church with plush and bustle, or accept that Christ Church Spitalfields is a design for the threshold of fear, that we may have experienced a Piranesian nightmare? If fair Palladian reason does not tempt this cynical generation to contemplation of the Four Last Things, maybe we need the touch of Hawksmoor terror to remind us that there are things the canon of materialism cannot reach.

Forthcoming Events

A **Greenwich Day** is planned for **Wednesday 10 May**, with expert guiding, lunch by the river and tea in an early Georgian house on Crooms Hill. There will be privileged access to the Royal Naval College, seeing parts not normally open and including Hawksmoor's extensive work there. We will see Vanbrugh Castle (outside) and English Heritage's architectural collection at Ranger's House, as well as Hawksmoor's St Alphege. The cost will be £35 (incl. 3-course lunch, afternoon tea and admission charges). We will begin at Greenwich BR station at 10 am. Book using the form enclosed.

There will be an all-day tour on a private double-decker bus to see **all Hawksmoor's London churches** on **Saturday 20 May**, starting 10am. The expert guide will be Donald Findlay, Deputy Secretary of the Council for the Care of Churches. The cost (incl. bus, lunch and donations) is £20 for Friends subscribers, and £25 for their guests and others. Book using the enclosed form: places are limited.

The **1995 Spitalfields Festival** is **7-28 June**. The Festival Diary and details of priority booking are now available. Call the Festival Hotline on 0171-377 1362 (24 hrs).

The former public convenience near Christ Church is the improbable venue for an art installation 'About Brick Lane' by Mary Anne Francis & Siraj Izhar. Showing to 15 March: noon to 3pm

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