

# Columns

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THE FRIENDS OF CHRIST CHURCH SPITALFIELDS

*Columns is the newsletter of the Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields who are leading the restoration of Nicholas Hawksmoor's church, one of the most important Baroque churches in Europe.*

*Please support us by subscribing or making a donation. Use the form with this issue to make a donation, or telephone the Friends' office on 020 7859 3035, or visit our web site [www.christchurchspitalfields.org](http://www.christchurchspitalfields.org).*

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## Interior restoration successfully completed

Supporters of the Friends will be delighted to know that the works to restore the interior of Christ Church were completed at the end of the summer and Christ Church is once again open for worship and to visitors. Many of you who have not already had the opportunity to visit will have seen some of the photographs in the press and read the universal acclaim for the appropriateness and beauty of the works achieved.

Although in future issues of *Columns* we will be telling you about the continuing appeals for the organ and crypt, this edition is to say thank you to all of the 'Friends' who have contributed in whatever way to reach this stage.

There are many of you – around two thousand throughout the United Kingdom and many parts of the world – and your support has been greatly appreciated. We have received help in all sorts of ways, from the small girl who gave her pocket

money, to the individuals and charitable trusts who, over many years, have given thousands of pounds. Then there are all the people who give of their time or resources: we are all united by a wish to see Hawksmoor's great church restored to its original glory.

The restoration has been a story of people and in this edition we wish to celebrate those who have spent the last two years organising the project and working on the building and to thank them all for the marvellous job they have done.

Also in this issue is news of some of the forthcoming events at Christ Church including a service of celebration and thanksgiving for the reopening of the church with the Bishop of London preaching.

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*The restored and redecorated plasterwork of the nave arcade and aisle vaults.*



## The crafts of the restoration

*Red Mason, Project Architect to the restoration, compares the craft techniques of Hawksmoor's time with those employed in the present day.*

The restoration of the interior of Christ Church has utilised the skills of many craftsmen, stone masons, joiners, carvers, plasterers, decorators and, although their work is not often regarded as a craft, scaffolders. Many of the tools used by the craftsmen in the first quarter of the eighteenth century have now been replaced by machinery, but the approach adopted for the restoration, the materials, the techniques employed and the knowledge required, was very similar to the skills and knowledge demanded from Hawksmoor's craftsmen. It is only possible here to mention a very few of the craftsmen who worked on the restoration, but the results are a tribute to everybody who was involved.

### The new floor

In 1724 Thomas Dunn, the masonry contractor, laid 3831 square feet of 'Rubb'd Purbeck Mitchell Pavin' in the main body of the church at a cost of 1 shilling and 2 pence per square foot. (The approximate area of the aisles between the box pews, excluding the paving in the Sanctuary, based on a reconstruction of the original layout of the church, is about 3,230 square feet.) Hawksmoor's floor was taken up in 1866 when the galleries were removed, but a few small Purbeck paving samples were found directly below the two columns supporting the Organ Gallery.

The new floor in the church consists of stones taken from five different beds of stone in the Isle of Purbeck, the area between Corfe Castle and Swanage: Cap, Downsvein, Thornback, Inland Freestone and Pond Freestone. The eighteenth century paving slabs were quarried in underground mines, the large stones were then split, the slabs squared, the top face dressed and finally 'Rubb'd' to achieve a flat smooth finish. Today's stone was taken from an open cast quarry, then cut into slabs on a multiple frame saw (rather like a large bread slicer), squared and the faces rubbed.

Great skill is required in selecting the stones in the quarry and in cutting the stones exactly to the size and thickness required. In the eighteenth century the stones would have been loaded onto a boat in Poole Harbour and after arriving in the Thames, taken by cart to the church; today around seventy pallets of stone came by road in three deliveries. The layout of the new floor was designed long before quarrying commenced, but

the random mix of the stones in the panels between the bands was determined by trial and error on the drawing board before laying the floor commenced. The final proof of the skill of the quarrymen from W. J. Haysom and Son is that the masons from Stone Restoration Services Ltd, who laid the floor, were able to accommodate all the numerous small variations in the dimensions of the church and keep to the tight three millimetre joints that had been specified between the paving stones.

### Carpentry and joinery

The construction of the oak panelling, the gallery fronts and the other woodwork is traditional: mortice and tenon joints with dowel pegs identical to the form of construction used by Gabriel Appleby, Hawksmoor's joinery contractor. However all the mouldings and joints were cut by machine rather than by hand, and the number of modern craftsmen involved in the work must have been only a fraction of the number of men required in the eighteenth century. It is not known whether the eighteenth century craftsmen were based on site and worked either in the half finished church and in sheds erected in the churchyard, or whether the work was carried out in workshops all over London. But the volume of oak required and the space needed must have been very similar; the appearance of the church in the summer months of 2004 as the works neared completion and all the panelling was being installed, must have been very similar to the appearance of the church in the years 1727 to 1729.

There are three large carved brackets under each gallery front, described in the original building accounts as 'Cartoozes', which appear to support the fronts; the brackets are in fact not structural, the fronts being supported on cantilevered flooring joists. Gabriel Appleby provided '42 Wain't Cartoozes 1ft 8in by 10 by 9 glued & fitted for ye Carvers each [at] 8 shillings each, the total cost coming to £16-16 shillings-0 pence'. When the galleries at the west end of the church were dismantled in 2000 and 2001 a series of Roman numerals was discovered on the back of the brackets and on the cornice moulding which runs round the top of the brackets and along the face of the main beam supporting the galleries. It seems likely that the procedure adopted in the eighteenth century was as follows: the oak blocks for the brackets and the un-carved sections of the cornices were carefully cut to length and fitted in place. The joiners then took down the brackets and sections of cornice and numbered them (Roman numerals being adopted because the numbers could be easily and quickly cut with



*One of the new gallery fronts apparently supported by three elaborately carved 'cartoozes'.*

a chisel), after which the components were sent off to the carvers, Thomas Darby and Gervase Smith. After the carving had been completed the components were returned to the church and re-fixed by the joiners. Twenty-seven of the original brackets survived and as many sections of the original cornices as possible have been reused.

A similar procedure to that used in the eighteenth century had to be adopted by Wallis Joinery and Beamfast, the company responsible for installing the joinery in the church, to ensure that all the old and new cornices and brackets fitted together exactly before the new lengths of cornices were sent off to the carvers, Gonzalez and Harms in Somerset. The skill of the joiners can be seen in the high quality of the new work, and the care with which the surviving original sections of woodwork have been integrated; the skill of the carvers can be judged from the fact that it is difficult to distinguish their new work from the old.

### Plasterwork

The skills of the plasterers from Cook and Sons, and the techniques they used were probably identical with those employed by the plasterers working for Isaac Mansfield, Hawksmoor's plastering contractor. The new ceilings under the galleries in the north and south aisles were erected on chestnut laths, Mansfield had used oak laths; the cornices were run in situ using a technique which has changed little over the centuries. Only the larger moulding in the centre of each bay was made

using a more modern technique. Casts were taken from original mouldings, with the pattern known as a 'Vitruvian Wave', which had survived at the west end of the church. The new mouldings were cast on a bench from the moulds rather than being run and modelled in situ.

### Scaffolding

Although many people may not regard scaffolding as a craft, a high degree of skill was required to move and position the vast amounts of poles and boards required for the scaffolding in the church without damaging either the existing fabric, in particular items such as the organ case, the Coade stone royal arms, the elaborate plaster and stone cornices, mouldings and capitals. Even more care was required in removing the scaffold so as not to damage the new as well as the existing fabric.

The size and intricacy of the scaffold required to carry out all the works at high level provided a vivid insight into the scaffolding that would have been required by the eighteenth century craftsmen. Very little evidence survives to show us what form this took, but one small detail was discovered when the brick sub-floor and the vaults below the new stone floor in the nave was repaired. A series of six inch diameter holes was discovered in the brickwork in positions very close to the points where the major supports for the modern scaffold were located. The purpose of the holes can only be guessed at, but the most likely explanation is that they were left in the brickwork when the principal supports, six inch diameter fir poles like modern telegraph poles, were removed, when Hawksmoor's scaffold was dismantled.

### Fill the gap

As was reported in the last issue, the Christ Church floor appeal had a marvellous response and we would like to thank again all the people who contributed so generously. They will be recorded in a special handwritten book. This appeal is now closed.

### Buy a chair for Christ Church

We have now raised enough money for 100 of the 600 chairs needed for nave: this amounts to some £16,000. We are very grateful to everyone who has so far contributed to this appeal. We are also appreciative that some people have clubbed together with their friends or work colleagues to buy a chair and make a joint dedication. If you would like more information on the chair appeal, please contact the Friends' office or pick up a leaflet in Christ Church.

## Recent events

### London Open House Weekend

Christ Church attracted several thousand visitors at this year's London Open House weekend. This was the first major opportunity to see inside the restored interior and the universal acclaim in the press had created a huge amount of interest.

The Friends would like to express their thanks to all those who came and worked as volunteer stewards for their hard work in making this such a successful weekend.

### Hawksmoor six London churches bus tour

The annual Six London Churches Bus Tour organised by the Friends took place this year in September. Although there are works planned and in progress at five of the churches, this year it was possible to see inside all six of them. One of the participants wrote:

I would like to thank you for the very enjoyable tour last Saturday. It was well organised, and ran efficiently, but not at the cost of informality and friendliness. Lunch was great too! Of course the glory of the tour was the churches, and being guided in and around them by experts, who were so enthusiastic, and the incumbents who are so willing to receive us. Your own church was the star, the restoration was so wonderful, it really took your breath away stepping inside for the first time.

The Friends are very grateful to William Palin, deputy curator at the Sir John Soane's Museum, who kindly gave up his Saturday to be our expert guide. The party benefited from the tremendous amount of trouble he took in researching his day and for making it so interesting.

We were also fortunate to be able to have a quick look inside St George Bloomsbury which is currently a building site full of scaffolding. Peter Waxman of Molyneux Kerr, architect to the project at St George was able to tell the party a little about the extensive works that are being carried out there.

### Bus tour 2005

The Friends are intending to organise another Hawksmoor London Churches Bus Tour in late May or early June 2005. This is a unique opportunity to see six of his finest works in a day and to have an expert guide to explain their history and significance. For further information please write to the Friends.

## Forthcoming events

### Service of Celebration

A Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving for the the reopening of Christ Church will be held on Thursday 2nd December at 7 pm with the Bishop of London, patron to the Friends, preaching.

Numbers are limited and admission will be by ticket. If you would like to attend, please write to the Friends enclosing SAE, or telephone 0776 6351071 or email [service@christchurchspitalfields.org](mailto:service@christchurchspitalfields.org).

### The Christ Church lecture

The first lecture 'Evidence for the restoration' will be given by A D ('Red') Mason, architect to the restoration at 6.30 pm on Tuesday 7th December. Tickets £10 (£5 concessions and paid-up supporters of the Friends) are available on the door or write to the Friends enclosing SAE.

### Forthcoming concerts

Gabrieli Consort & Players have launched their new season in London at Christ Church with a series of six concerts. For further information telephone the Gabrieli Consort at 020 7613 4404 or visit [www.gabrieli.com](http://www.gabrieli.com).

### The Spitalfields Festival

The festival returns to Christ Church for their Christmas Festival, 13–22 December 2004. For further information call the Festival Hotline 020 7377 1362.

### Songs of Praise from Christ Church

The BBC TV programme *Songs of Praise* is making an edition of the series from Christ Church to celebrate the restoration. The television recording of the congregational singing will take place over two evenings at Christ Church on Monday 10th January and Tuesday 11th January 2005.

The programme will be broadcast at the end of January 2005. There are a limited number of free tickets available for this event. If you would like to attend please contact the Songs of Praise office (*not* the Friends) at the address or numbers below by 1st December, letting them know that you are a 'Friend of Spitalfields'. Tickets will be posted before Christmas.

E-mail: [songsofpraise@bbc.co.uk](mailto:songsofpraise@bbc.co.uk). Put 'Tickets Spitalfields' in the e-mail subject field.

Ticket Line telephone: 0161 244 3991

Fax: 0161 244 3276

## Christ Church opening times

Christ Church is now open to visitors on Sundays, 11 to 4 pm, and on Tuesdays, 11 am to 4 pm.

The main Sunday service is held weekly at 10.30 am; Prayer Book communion is at 8.30 am on the last Sunday of the month.

For group visits and information about hiring Christ Church for events contact Christ Church Spitalfields Venue at 020 7377 6793 or visit [www.spitalfieldsvenue.org](http://www.spitalfieldsvenue.org)

## Thank you

The campaign to restore Christ Church relies on the support of many people. The Friends would like to thank law firm Ashurst for generously providing an office; for printing this edition of columns and other printed material.

Thank you to our volunteers who come and help both in the office and at special events. We are particularly grateful to Fiona Ligonnet and Gill Hernon who provide reliable and regular back up in the office throughout the year.

## Back up support

The Friends Office is run with a small number of staff in order to keep our overhead costs to a minimum.

## Volunteers

If you would like to get involved with the Friends in a practical way, and you could spare a few hours of your time, why not come and help us?

We are looking for volunteers for help during office hours – particularly to help with the mailings. We also need people to help at our special events.

Please contact the Friends' office if you are interested.

## Postage

If you or your business could help with postage facilities this would greatly help with our mailings. Please contact the Friends office: 020 7859 3035.

## Recent gifts

The Friends are grateful for the generosity of the many individuals and organisations who support the Restoration Appeal. We value donations large and small. Thank you. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank publicly all those who give to the restoration by standing order, thereby saving us paperwork and money.

The Friends are most grateful for the generous bequest from the estate of the late Peter Lerwill.

In addition to those who have given to the floor and chair appeals, who will be recorded in a special book, and those who prefer to remain anonymous, we would like to thank the following for their recent donations:

### Gifts of £100 and over

Mr & Mrs G Bland  
Tara Howard  
Hugo Marquez  
Roderick Thomson  
N E Trippett  
WAG TV

### Gifts of £200 and over

Byrne Charitable Trust  
McCorquodale Charitable Trust  
Miller Hare Limited  
John C Peck  
Sue Prickett  
C K Stratton-Browne

### Gifts of £500 and over

Allan Murray-Jones

### Gifts of £1000 and over

F&C Smaller Companies PLC  
Trusthouse Charitable Foundation

### Gift of £5000

Historic Churches Preservation Trust

The Restoration has also received a generous grant from the Robert Wilson Challenge Fund, administered through the World Monuments Fund in Great Britain. This grant provided a large part of the matching funds required by the Heritage Lottery Fund for the painting and decorative plaster work.

Photographs, many in colour, of the work in progress can be viewed on the Friends' website at:

[www.christchurchspitalfields.org](http://www.christchurchspitalfields.org)

## Personal column

Columns interviewed Dennis Charlton, site manager for Wallis Special Projects, about his experience working on the restoration of the interior. Dennis has over thirty years of building site experience mainly in London, including about twenty-four years managing residential, commercial, historic buildings and new buildings sites, and refurbishments.

*What is your job description?*

Site manager: responsible for organising, short term planning, administration, co-ordinating subcontractors, safe working practices, overseeing site management team; liaising with the professional team, local authority, utilities, Health and Safety Executive, traffic management etc.

*In what way, if any, is running a job like this on a church different from other projects?*

When working in a building such as Christ Church, Wallis Special Projects take into account the sensitivities that the client and associates are sure to have. Special efforts were made to maintain acceptable standards of behaviour in this environment: the response from the people on site was very good. Respect for the building itself and for its monuments was high on our list of priorities.

*A lot of people think that craftsmanship in the building industry is dead. Do you think that this is true?*

The overall demand for craftsmanship is obviously less now than even 30 years ago as current clients require economical, efficient buildings with few frills. However, as can be seen at Christ Church, there are still people who display the necessary skills. We have had the benefit of skilful plasterers, stonemasons, carpenters and joiners, decorators, polishers and metalworkers with blacksmithing skills. Only time will tell whether they may die out: certainly some young people have been on Christ Church: a good sign.

*What was the previous building you worked on?*

The previous building was Old Poplar Library, a Grade II listed building converted into office space.

*What will be the next building you are working on?*

Possibly the next project is Spitalfields Market, renovating the central area roof.

*How has your job changed over the years? Has European legislation had an impact?*

The job has changed in several ways: the expected pace of the works from conception to completion; tightening of safety controls on building works and the consequent increase in administration associated with on site works; the change from building contractors who had most trades in house to a sub-contractor based industry; the reduction in requirements for a highly trained work force; the result has been the loss of apprenticeships. European legislation has not had fundamental effects on site works.

*What were your initial thoughts when you were appointed to be Senior Site Manager on this project?*

When Wallis Special Projects suggested that Christ Church was my next job, I was very pleased, having been aware of its 'presence' in Spitalfields for most of my time working in London, especially when on projects in Brick Lane and Petticoat Lane.

*Now that the project has finished, are you pleased with the results?*

I believe that each trade has successfully produced the result that was required, such as the magnificent stone floor to very tight tolerances; joinery which to my mind is virtually flawless; plasterwork in the aisles which is traditionally and excellently detailed; chandeliers which are perfect; wrought iron work of the highest quality. All of these and some more including the positive responses from all of the trades on site are what I'm proud of.

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Christ Church, Fournier Street, London E1 6QE  
Telephone 020 7859 3035  
friends@christchurchspitalfields.org  
www.christchurchspitalfields.org

## How to support the Friends

To become a Supporter of the Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields please make a donation of a minimum of £25 p.a. (£30 for overseas). Supporters receive the Friends' quarterly newsletter *Columns* and advance notice of tours, lectures and other special events that the Friends organise. If you are a UK taxpayer, we can claim 28p for every pound you give us. Please sign the declaration below.

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towards the restoration of:

- Christ Church Spitalfields  
 The Richard Bridge Organ

Please make cheques payable to:  
The Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields.

We would like to acknowledge gifts of £100 or more in *Columns*. Please tell us if you wish to remain anonymous.

### Please complete both parts of the form below:

I am a UK taxpayer and would like the Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields to treat all donations I have made since 6 April 2000 and any subsequent donations I make as Gift Aid donations. I understand that I must have paid an amount of Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax equal to the tax you reclaim on my donations. This does not apply to CAF donations.

You can give money in several ways: by cheque (bank or CAF), by Standing Order which allows us to plan ahead and helps keep down administrative costs, by payroll giving through Give As You Earn or with credit/debit card through our web site. Please complete the appropriate parts of this page.

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Please pay to the Royal Bank of Scotland plc of 62-63 Threadneedle Street, London EC2R 8LA, Sort Code 15-10-00 for the credit of The Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields Account No. 13075487 the sum of:

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