

Columns

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THE FRIENDS OF CHRIST CHURCH SPITALFIELDS
REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 276056

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.

Restored font revealed at Christ Church

Recent visitors to Christ Church may have seen that the beautiful and extraordinary font has been restored and reinstated. It had been boxed up and stored for forty years. Its return and restoration has been made possible by the generosity of our Supporters and of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Thomas Dunn, the mason who carried out all the works between 1715–1729, includes a clear description of the font in the Books of the Works. The marble used was Italian and the cost of the bowl alone was £18, a very large amount (the cost of the material and carving of a single column capital was £17) and signifies the liturgical importance attached to the font in the eighteenth century.

There is no evidence about the font's original position, but one of Hawksmoor's early plans suggests that he may have intended it to stand in the apse at the west end under the organ. The overall size of the basin in this plan suggests that Hawksmoor was possibly proposing a font which would, at eleven feet long, have been large enough for adult baptisms by immersion. In a meeting on 16th July 1712 the Commissioners had resolved that fonts in each church be so large as to permit baptism by immersion when desired. By the time Christ Church came to be fitted out however, more practical matters of space and cost perhaps came into play.

Any evidence for the original location of the font was destroyed in 1866 when all the floors were re-laid. One small piece of evidence tends to confirm that the font was located at the west end: the decorator's accounts of 1822 refer to the positioning of the Christening Pew in the south west end. Between 1910 and 1966 the font stood in the easternmost bay of the south aisle. It was dismantled in 1966 when the nave roof was rebuilt and it and other removable items of church furniture were stacked up and stored in the church.



'The font consists of a shallow bowl of purple-veined marble, oval in form and gadrooned on the underside, resting on a Portland stone pedestal of exaggeratedly bombé profile and octangular plan. Each cardinal face of the pedestal has a plain sunk panel, and each narrow angle face is carved with a pendant of husks.' Survey of London, vol. xxvii: Spitalfields and Mile End New Town, 1957

The font has now been installed at the west end of the nave between the pedestals of the two columns on the south side of the centre aisle. This position has been chosen because it is close to the font's original location and it will allow the font, the officiating priest and the family to be clearly seen by the congregation during a baptism. The font will be re-dedicated on Easter Day at the 10.30AM service.

Restoring the monuments

The restoration of the font is part of a small programme of works for which The Friends are currently raising funds. This work is being carried out before

the two remaining major projects: the restoration of the Richard Bridge organ and of the crypt.

One of the largest items in this programme is the cleaning and conservation of the monuments. The two most important monuments in the church are those conspicuously placed against the quadrant walls flanking the altar recess. They are of great artistic value and quality. At present, their woeful condition stands out in stark contrast to the results of the care and attention that has been taken on restoring the fabric of Hawksmoor's masterpiece. Their prominent position in the building makes them immediately noticeable by every person who visits Christ Church.

With advice from the Council for the Care of Churches a programme of works has been agreed in line with best conservation practice focussing on sympathetic cleaning of the surfaces of the monuments. When restored, the monuments will once again make a glorious frame to the Sanctuary, the focus of the church. Other items include works which are largely unseen such as electrical supplies for performance lighting and further works in the ringing chamber. It made economic and strategic sense not to do these items until after the main building contract and now is the time to do them. The works can be carried out item by item, thereby minimizing the disruption to the smooth running of the building.

The Friends still need your support!

We urgently need help to raise funds to carry out these works and your support is vital. The whole programme is £90,000 of which we have already raised £65,000 and much of this programme will be achieved with support from the original Heritage Lottery Fund grant. However, in order to draw down the pledged HLF funds, the Friends must raise the matching monies. As the gearing on this is very generous, it means your donation is worth four times its face value; if in addition you gift aid it, this makes your donation worth five times its original value. So please consider supporting the Friends. Every contribution is valuable and greatly appreciated.

Date for your diary

Tour of Hawksmoor's London churches

The Friends are arranging another tour of Hawksmoor's London churches on Saturday 13th May. We are delighted to have as our expert guide William Palin, Assistant Curator at Sir John Soane's Museum. These tours are very popular so please book early.



The monument to Edward Peck (d.1736), one of the commissioners appointed by Parliament under the Fifty New Churches Act, and who laid the foundation stone of Christ Church. Erected in 1737, it is by Thomas Dunn, stone mason of Christ Church.

Restoring the Richard Bridge Organ of 1735

The restoration of this historic instrument is understandably attracting great interest. Discussions involving the parish, Friends, conservation bodies, the diocese of London and potential funders are going forward in order to produce in the near future a definitive scheme for the organ's restoration. Its completion will crown the success of a restoration project which has seen Hawksmoor's great church brought back from the brink of disaster. As one of Britain's greatest historical musical instruments, and one of European significance, it will play its part in bringing life, spirit and artistic activity to Spitalfields.

The Friends have already raised £60,000 for this project. If you think you can help, please consider making a donation. You can donate by filling in the form in this issue of *Columns* or by visiting our website. Thank you.

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.

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 £25 and over

George Allan*
The Hon Nicholas Assheton
Mr & Mrs K Baker
Bancroft Library
Cynthia Butterworth
William Clarke*
The Cook & The Butler Event Co Ltd
Peter Currie
The Revd Alex Dick
Patricia Drummond
Dr Julia Ellis
Richard Foulkes*
Richard Garnett*
Malcolm Graham
Colston Hartley
Helen Hughes
Kate Jenkins*
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Martin Plaut*
Hazel Roberts
Jill Roberts
James Ryan
Christian Steer
David Strachan
Dr Henry Summerson
Mr & Mrs S Summerson*
Barry Sutton *

Mr I T Tower
Nigel Trippett
John Walton*

Gifts of £100 and over

Byrne Charitable Trust*
John Clay*
Ralph Cunningham
Gillian Figures*
Duncan McKay
Ann Norman-Butler
Royal Academy of Music
The Sainer Charity*
Mr GHB Tregear*

Gifts of £200 and over

Geoffrey Collens*
Concordia*
Herbert Smith Solicitors
Howard Kingsbury
Donations in memory of Ian Mackenzie-Kerr
The Modiano Charitable Trust
John Peck
Pauline Pinder

Gifts of £500 and over

Allan Murray-Jones
Miss Hazel M Wood Charitable Trust*
Worshipful Company of Constructors
Charitable Trust

*For the Richard Bridge Organ Appeal

How to support the Friends

To become an acknowledged Supporter of the Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields please make a minimum annual donation of £25 (£30 for overseas). You can contribute towards the restoration of Christ Church or the Richard Bridge Organ. Supporters receive the Friends' newsletter *Columns* and advance notice of tours, lectures and other special events that the Friends organise.

You can give money in several ways:

- by **payroll giving** through Give As You Earn
- with a **credit or debit card** through our web site.

Or, by completing the appropriate parts of this page:

- by **standing order** (helping us to plan ahead and keep down administrative costs)
- by bank or CAF **cheque**.

Standing Order

Your bank and account details:

To Bank
of
.....
..... Bank address
Sort code-.....-..... A/c no

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:

£ each month quarter year starting on dd/mm/yy (no earlier than one month from today, please) until further notice. This donation is in addition to*/replaces* previous Standing Orders, if any, in favour of the Charity. The Friends will process Standing Orders and forward them to your bank. *delete as applicable

Please complete the sections below:

I enclose my cheque for:

- £25 £30 £50 £250 £1,000
 other £.

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

Please complete the sections below:

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If you are a UK taxpayer please Gift Aid your donation and increase your gift by 28% at no extra cost to you. For every £1 that you give to us, we can reclaim the tax to make your donation worth £1.28 through the Gift Aid scheme if you sign the Gift Aid declaration.

I am a UK taxpayer and would like the Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields to treat all donations I make since 6 April 2000 (and until I notify you otherwise) 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.

Signature

For further information about Gift Aid, visit HM Revenue and Customs' website:
www.hmrc.gov.uk/leaflets/ir65.htm

Please allocate my donation towards the restoration of:

- Christ Church Spitalfields
 The Richard Bridge Organ

The Friends would like to acknowledge gifts of £25 or more in *Columns*, but if you wish to remain anonymous please tick the box below :

- Please do not print my name in *Columns*

Name
Address
.....
Postcode
Telephone number
E-mail address

Data Protection Act 1998: the information you provide will only be used by the Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields and will not be passed to any other organisations.

Thank you. Please return the completed page to:
FOCCS, FREEPOST, LONDON E1 6BR

Awards

Supporters will be pleased to hear that the restoration of Christ Church Spitalfields has been recognised with two further awards.

Georgian Group Architectural Awards 2005

Christ Church Spitalfields won the 2005 Georgian Group Architectural Award for Restoration of a Georgian Church. Seven winners were presented with these awards by HRH Princess Alexandra at Christie's, London SW1 on Tuesday 1st November 2005. These conservation awards, sponsored by Savills, recognise excellence in the restoration of Georgian buildings.



The Wood Awards 2005

Launched in 1971 as the Carpenters' Award this is now Britain's premier award for the use of wood in buildings.

Christ Church was judged the winner in the Conservation/Restoration category for the 2005 Wood Awards. The awards were presented on 19th October at Carpenters' Hall in London by Sir Michael Latham, Chairman of CITB-Construction Skills.

The restoration of Christ Church Spitalfields drew high praise from the judges: 'It is evident that a very high level of workmanship has been used ... great attention to detail. This is one of the most impressive pieces of architecture in London and has been extremely well restored ... the quality of the finish is superb.'

Christ Church had already received the special award for 'A Glorious Restoration' from the Royal Fine Art Commission Trust's 'Building of the Year Award 2005' (reported in the last edition of *Columns*), and the Commendation in the Stone Federation's Natural Stone Awards in 2004.

Visiting Christ Church

The opening times at Christ Church have been extended and are now:

Sunday: Service 10.30AM, open to public 1AM–4PM.

Monday: 11AM–2PM if not in use for service or event*

Tuesday: 11AM–4PM (12 noon: guided tour sometimes available*)

Wednesday–Friday 11AM–2PM, if not in use for service or event*

*Please call in advance to check: 020 7377 6793.

Postcards and publications are on sale at the church on Tuesdays and Sundays.

The Parish is organising volunteers to be on duty in the church and sell cards and publications. If you can spare an hour or two on a weekly or monthly basis, or you would like some more information please contact Kim Gooding, 020 7377 6793, or at welcomeofficer@christchurchspitalfields.org.uk.

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: 020 7859 3035.

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. The Friends would like to thank Broadgate West for storing the Christ Church pulpit while we raise funds for its repair. 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.

Personal Column

It is with great sadness that The Friends mark the death of Rev. Eddy Stride last autumn. This tribute has been written by his son Derek Stride, a Churchwarden at Christ Church and a Trustee of the Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields.

Rev. Eddy Stride

4th March 1925 – 7th September 2005

Rector of Christ Church Spitalfields

‘An architectural wonder and a sociological disaster’ – that was how my father described Christ Church Spitalfields, soon after our arrival here. With a great heart for people, he was attracted to Spitalfields by the daunting challenge of unimaginable (these days) poverty, and the building was the last thing in his thoughts. No one in their right mind would have come to Spitalfields in the late 1960s and early ’70s, but my father saw the need. A stone’s throw from the City, yet a forgotten community. Many different races from around the world, living in the run-down estates, working in the varied local industries, mainly the rag trade. The living part of the building was in the Crypt with the ground-breaking initiative of the Spitalfields Crypt Trust’s work with vagrant alcoholics.

Gradually, others moved into the area, interested in saving the Georgian buildings. The Friends were formed, which as well as campaigning for funding, meant getting covered in dust and dirt with ‘hands on’ work. The first concerts were held: not so very effective as fund raising events but very successful in raising awareness of the plight of the building. From these early concerts, the Spitalfields Festival later emerged to become the organization we see today.

From the start, there were struggles to maintain the building as a church, not just a monument. The Diocese, with their limited funds and a decaying building were talking about demolition; suggestions were made that it become a concert hall or a library. Eddy with the help of early trustees started

the process and fought the battles which have resulted in the beautiful building we can all now enjoy. He worked with the architect Red Mason, Eleanor Murray, the then Chairman of The Friends, and many other trustees and volunteers over the years, debating issues and confronting challenges. Despite all the pressures, Eddy made sure that, although an outstanding piece of architecture, no one forgot that it was a church, built to the glory of God, and for His worship. Many strong, lasting friendships were made, particularly with people like Eric Elstob, who was a great support, and not afraid to get his hands dirty.

As well as leading the church for nearly twenty years, Eddy was involved in the local community, seeking to create a better environment for local people – many of the trees in Spitalfields which we enjoy today were planted due to his persuasive arguments. He often acted to calm cultural tensions between different groups.

He was involved in management and at a personal level with the work of the Spitalfields Crypt Trust. He was chair or trustee on many local charities concerned with improving people’s lives. At a national level, he was concerned with the moral state of the nation and was frequently in debate on TV, or writing to newspapers; he saw the restoration of the church building as part of his mission to restore people’s lives.

One of the founder trustees of the Friends, in a very kind e-mail, said of Eddy, ‘His guidance, practical and spiritual, his support and his total involvement added a whole dimension to the otherwise purely practical work of restoring a historic building. With Eddy at the helm, we never forgot for an instant that we were fixing a church, and through our work, a church that I know he came to love’.

I will finish with a note from Hugh Casson, written on one of his paintings of Christ Church, currently hanging over the stairs in my parents’ home in Stamford, Lincolnshire: ‘For Eddie Stride, who brought life back.’

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