

Columns

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THE FRIENDS OF CHRIST CHURCH SPITALFIELDS
REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 276056

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.

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Memorials and inscriptions

Two more pieces of restoration work have just been completed, the last of those for which the Heritage Lottery grant provided funding. The larger is to the Old Vestry Room where the north and south walls were dominated by the large inscrutable blackened panels above the fireplaces. These panels were inspected and a programme for their restoration prepared by Tom Organ of The Wall Paintings Workshop of Faversham, Kent. They reported that the panels were in very poor condition: dusty and flaking, their varnish discoloured by two hundred and fifty years of soot from the coal fires that warmed the members of the Minister, Churchwardens and Overseers of the Vestry. The lime plaster on which they were directly painted had cracked and in places had become detached. Both boards are surrounded by gilded *trompe l'oeil* frames of leaves with a centrepiece of cherubs.

Standard conservation techniques were used to conserve the panels. First they were dusted and vacuumed, then the discoloured varnish was removed using a combination of adhesive tape and organic solvents taking care not to damage the underlying background black paint. The whole was then stabilised by injection, the plaster repaired, and the whole re-touched with powder pigments in a reversible medium.

The finished work has confirmed what previously had been only just discernible: the panels are 'benefaction boards' that record the names of parishioners who had made gifts to the poor. The lists record donations of a period of over a hundred years: the earliest is from May 6 1721 for a gift made by Prisca Coburn of Bow, and the latest entry on the south wall from August 1840 records a single benefaction, the equivalent of a Standing Order, from the will of George Fournier, 'late of Tavistock Square'. The full list of names has now been transcribed and the Friends hope to make this available on the website www.christchurchspitalfields.org.

The second and final item of work was to clean the remaining monuments that had been stored in the crypt under the west steps during the restoration of the main church. These monuments had come from various places; some had been found loose in the crypt, others were found badly broken in the soil and were uncovered during the archaeological project carried out in the crypt during the 1980s.

The intention was to assemble and fix the stones so that they would be preserved and safe from accidental damage. The scope of the project was limited to light cleaning prior to repair, re-fixing broken elements,



One of the two new postcards the Friends have recently produced. 'The west front of Christ Church'; for details see page 2.

filling major losses to provide structural stability and installation on the walls, mostly in the vaulted area under the stairs. The majority were surface mounted except three which required a bottom shelf to be set into the wall to support the inscription panel.

Many of the stones have been re-erected in the portico vault. Three of the monuments, to Elizabeth, Edward and John Peck, have been fixed to the north wall of the south west crypt entrance vestibule which was formerly the Peck Vault. Although during the Spitalfields Project excavation thirty-nine burials were found in this vault, only one coffin had a legible coffin plate; that of Deborah Peck. These three memorials of Belgian Black marble were found badly broken in the soil covering the burials. It is fitting that the memorials to the Peck family are set in this position.

Two limestone monuments connected with the churchyard have also been fixed in the south west crypt entrance. The first records a wall erected in the churchyard in 1727; it is not known where it was originally placed, it was found loose in the crypt, but the thickness of stone and inscription suggest that the stone was built into a wall in the churchyard. The wall

may have been demolished when Commercial Street was formed. The second, dated 1821, is a record of the extent of the churchyard at that date.

Finally, an arch-shaped marble inscription panel commemorating the installation in 1876 of the east window in the Sanctuary has been fixed on the wall outside the north door of the Old Vestry Room. One can view both this monument and the east window at the same time. These works were carried out by the conservation firm Taylor Pearce Restoration Services who also restored the Peck & Ladbroke monuments, the font and the monuments in the main vestibule.

These last two projects – restoring the Vestry Room panels and the re-fixing of the broken crypt monuments – complete the work to Christ Church which has been made possible by generous funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The HLF has provided £5.9 million towards the restoration.

Christine Whaite, chair of the Friends says: “We deeply appreciate the HLF’s generous and crucial support over the last twelve years. We have enjoyed the close working partnership with everybody at the HLF and its team of monitors. Christ Church is now a thriving place of worship at the heart of Spitalfields and an active venue for concerts, exhibitions, award ceremonies and receptions.”

The Friends are now turning their attention to raising the major funds needed for restoring the Richard Bridge organ. The Friends hope to bring further news about the progress of this project in the next issue of Columns.

The Friends are very grateful to Tom Organ of the The Wall Paintings Workshop and Matt Nation of Taylor Pearce for the source material for this article.

Open House London 2008

Christ Church will be taking part in Open House London again this year.

It will be open from 10am – 3pm on Saturday 20 September and from 1.30–4pm on Sunday 21 September. There will be bell ringing demonstrations on the Saturday with the possibility of viewing the ringing chamber. It will also be possible to visit the Old Vestry Room which is not usually open to the public. Postcards, Christmas cards and publications can be purchased. Please come and visit. If you would like to be involved and have time to volunteer (minimum 2.5 hours) please contact the Friends’ office as soon as possible for further details.

From the Rector

The Revd Andy Rider, Rector of Christ Church Spitalfields, writes: It is now four years since the beautifully restored Christ Church was re-opened, and meanwhile discussions have continued about the much needed re-development of the crypt. This autumn we hope to begin to engage architects, and to start fundraising in earnest for this vital next step in the history of Christ Church. The crypt will lend itself to hospitality, education and the arts, all rooted in the history of this fine building. Initial thoughts include the possibility of a café and lunchtime restaurant, a chapel, meeting spaces and multi-use rooms.

We do hope that you will continue to journey with us as we enter this phase of life together and ask for your prayers as we move on to the more detailed planning of the crypt.

Thank you

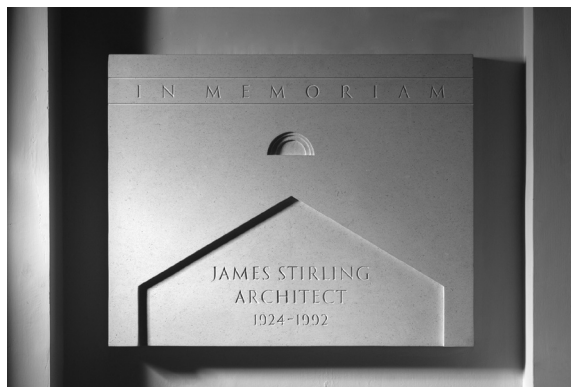
The Friends are most grateful to James Lloyd-Williams for translating the Hebrew texts on the monuments in the west Vestibule. Transcriptions of these and of other inscriptions may be viewed by visiting the Friends’ website.

New postcards

The Friends have recently produced two new colour postcards. The first, *View of the west front of Christ Church*, is from a photograph by Sanjay Kalideen, and is pictured on page 1.

The second, photographed by Sandra Lousada and pictured below, shows the memorial to James Stirling, architect (1924-92) installed in the vestibule at Christ Church in 2005.

These and other cards and publications can be obtained from the Friends office. Cards 40p each (minimum order £4). Details and order forms can be downloaded from the Friends’ website: www.christchurchspitalfields.org



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

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To Bank
of
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..... Bank address
Sort code-.....-.....
Account 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
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Please complete the sections below:

I enclose my cheque for:

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 other £.

Please make cheques payable to:
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If you are a UK taxpayer please Gift Aid your donation and increase your gift at no extra cost to you. Every £1 that you give is worth £1.28 to the Friends reclaimed through the Gift Aid scheme if you sign the Gift Aid declaration.

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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

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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 EI 6BR

Thank you

The Friends are grateful for the generosity of the many individuals and organisations who support the Restoration and Organ Appeals. We would like to thank the law firm Ashurst for generously providing an office; for printing this issue 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 Gill Heron and Susan

Whitehead who provide reliable and regular back up in the office throughout the year.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who prefer to remain anonymous and those who give to the restoration by standing order, thereby saving on administrative costs. We would also like to thank the following for their recent donations:

Gifts of £25 and over

Mr G E Allan*
Mrs P Boone
Mr E Brownbill*
Mr D A Budgett
Miss P C A Butterworth
Mr M Cox *In memory of my grandfather Joseph Cox*
Mrs A Davy
Mr A J L Day
Mrs M Dyke
Dr JP Ellis
Mr P Evans*
Mr D I Fowell
Mr J Gibb
Mr F L Grant*
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Mr D G Hilton*
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Ms H Taylor*
Mr N E Trippett
Mr J F Wong*

Gifts of £100 and over

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Glossop Pryor Foundation*
Mrs J Golay-Evans*
Sir John Goulden*
Mr D Grantham
The WTJ Griffin Charitable Settlement
Mrs F Hugill*
The Rt Hon Lord MacLean*
In Memory of Elsie Victoria Preston
Mr W Rathbone
Mr J W Scott
Mr J R A Scott-Oldfield*

Gifts of £200 and over

The Byrne Charitable Trust*
Mr C J Cazalet
Sir Peter Cazalet
Mr G A Collens*
Mr R Cunningham *In memory of Ian Nairn*
The DIBS Charitable Trust
Ms A M R Hobson*
Mr F Schmitt*

Gifts of £500 and over

Ms D R Burton
The Modiano Charitable Trust
Mr P R Taylor*

Gifts of £1000 and over

The Cromarty Trust*
The estate of the late Mr J E Gadsden
Miss E Murray MBE*
Mr P Vracas

Gifts of £10,000 and over

The estate of the late Mr T F Jackson

**partly or fully for the Richard Bridge Organ Appeal*

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