

# 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 coupon in this issue to make a donation, or telephone the Friends' office on 020 7247 0165.*

## The designs for completion

To everyone's delight the Friends have now completed the repair of the external stonework of the church, securing a safe and considerably extended life for the building's fabric. This great achievement would not have been possible without the support of our donors; we have been most fortunate in securing funding in all sorts of ways to reach this milestone. Both public and private money has been generously given to preserve this great building for future generations. We can now look to the second phase: works to the interior and the completion of the restoration of the building.

The interior will be restored to its appearance circa 1729 to 1745, while taking into account its primary role as a church and also its use for secular events, including the provision of modern electrical and heating installations and other facilities.

The Friends have been given a most generous donation to commission the Scheme Design Report and tender documents. This is a fully designed scheme (equivalent to an RIBA Stage 'E' report) to finish the interior; it will enable the project to be thoroughly prepared for tender and site. This support is crucial and shows great foresight, because although essential, no results are visible until much later when the work starts. We hope that other donors will be equally generous when they see the plans.

The Friends have appointed, generously sponsored by the Monument Trust, Malcolm Reading Associates as advisors to the project, to oversee the design team and drive the project forward. Their work is being generously sponsored by the Monument Trust. The specialist professional team appointed to advise us and to produce the various design drawings and schedules includes Whitfield Partners, architects, Cook & Butler, quantity surveyors, Hockley & Dawson, structural engineers, Hilson Moran Partnership, heating & electrical engineers and Arup Acoustics.

The approach to the design of the proposed works has been based on the surviving documentary, physical and archaeological evidence; the physical context and careful comparison and analysis of all



Jeremy Quinn

*A recent view of the newly consolidated and cleaned exterior of Christ Church*

the evidence of the development of the designs. Any changes to the original design that must be made in order to meet current needs and legislation, are carefully evaluated.

The papers for the Commissioners for the Fifty New Churches were deposited in Lambeth Palace in 1759, when the Commission was wound up, and the papers are still kept in the library there. These papers provide an exceptionally complete record of the details of the executed works. The detailed entries in the bills submitted to the Commission by the trade contractors and the final records of all the payments made to the contractors provide a vital guide to the parts of the interior which were altered or altogether destroyed in the nineteenth century. The documents for the works and alterations carried out in the nineteenth century supplement these papers and provide valuable clues as to the appearance of items which have been destroyed, such as the reredos. All the physical evidence,

## How to support the Friends

To become a Supporter of the Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields please make a donation of a minimum of £20 p.a. (£25 for overseas). Supporters receive the Friends' quarterly newsletter *Columns*. They also receive advance notice of lectures and other special events that the Friends organise.

Your gift will be matched by Lottery funding at a ratio of 1 to 3. £20 donated to the Appeal enables the Friends to do £80 of restoration work. In addition, if you are a UK taxpayer, we can now claim a further 28p for every pound you give us. Please sign the declaration below.

You can give money in two ways: by cheque (banker's or CAF), or by Banker's Order. Banker's Orders allow us to plan with more certainty and help keep down our administrative costs. Please complete the appropriate part of this page.

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The Richard Bridge Organ

I would like the Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields to reclaim tax on any donations that I make. I have paid an amount of UK income tax or capital gains tax equal to any tax reclaimed.

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on \_\_\_\_\_

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*\*delete as applicable*

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We will process Banker's Orders and forward them to your bank.

## Recent gifts

The Friends are grateful to the many individuals and organisations who are giving with such generosity to the Restoration Appeal. We value donations large and small. We would like to thank the following for their recent donations, and those who prefer to remain anonymous.

### Gifts of £5,000

Linklaters & Alliance  
The Trusthouse Charitable Foundation

### Gifts of £1,000

Ashurst Morris Crisp  
Herbert Smith Solicitors  
Mr Jeremy Hill  
The Cromarty Trust\*

### Gifts of £500

Mr Henry Barlow  
Foreign & Colonial Investment Trust  
The G L Doubleday Charitable Trust

### Gifts of £400

Mr A F Nafzger  
Mr & Mrs S Summerson  
Sir Anthony Touche

### Gift of £350

Robert & Caroline Schwartz Foundation

### Gifts of £250

Mr C J Cazalet  
Clifford Chance  
Mr M I Godbee  
Johann Gulotti  
Mrs P Pinder  
The Bates Charitable Trust  
The Worshipful Company of Fruiterers

### Gifts of £200

Mrs Myra Malkin  
Mr J C Peck  
The Modiano Charitable Trust

### Gifts of between £100 and £150

Mrs M A G Fenston  
The Sainer Charity  
Mr Steven Elliott  
Mrs Myra Malkin  
Wessex Fine Art Study Courses  
Mr Alexander Ratensky  
Mrs Karen Cross  
Mr Ralph Cunningham  
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Mr James T Nelson  
Mrs P Pinder  
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Mrs P C A G Smith  
St George-in-the-East\*  
Mr C K Stratton-Browne  
The Modiano Charitable Trust\*  
Ms Lena Tibblin-Borg  
David Whitehouse

### Gifts of between £50 and £100

C J Carey  
Ms Catherine Pantsios  
Mr John M Woodbridge  
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Architectural Dialogue Limited  
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Mr Ben Phillis  
Mr & Mrs John Rawlings  
Mr & Mrs James Stenner  
Lady Stirling  
Mr & Mrs W V Templeton  
The Friends of the V&A  
Mr R Thomson  
Ms Judith Weir

\* for the Richard Bridge Organ Appeal

in particular holes in the walls and columns for beams and joists, old fixings, surviving sections of woodwork, has been carefully examined and recorded.

During the development of the designs, the details of the documentary and archaeological evidence have been checked with the proposed design and the designs adjusted accordingly. This constant review has been carried out with the aim of producing a design where the size, shape and quantities of the components are similar to the details given in the accounts, and where the position of details of the construction tally with the archaeological evidence.

It is inevitable that in order to meet the current needs of the church, the parish and the various organisations that currently use the church, that some changes have to be made to the original design and that some the fittings, such as the box pews in the interior, cannot be restored. Where alterations have been made, an evaluation has been made of the impact of the alteration on the integrity of the original design and the appearance of the church. The proposed designs have taken into account the need to incorporate details to balance or compensate for aspects of the original design which might otherwise be lost.

The complete final designs have enabled the Quantity Surveyors, Cook & Butler, to produce detailed cost reports reflecting current prices. Given the success in completing the exterior of the church, the trustees have decided to be more ambitious and to plan for an ideal and total restoration of the interior. Additional items to upgrade the church for modern concert use will include a lift to permit full disabled access between the crypt and the main church; provision of glazed screens to the west end openings, partly for improved noise exclusion and also for heat conservation and provision of basic toilet facilities in the crypt.

The Friends are looking for £6.3 million to finish the building. £1.8 million have so far been raised and we are going to appeal for specific items in the interior such as the panelled fronts to the galleries, the carved brackets and the three brass chandeliers which will light the main body of the church.

Please call the Friend' office for further details of how you can help. Please consider giving generously. The prospect of a fully restored Christ Church to the vision of Hawksmoor is in sight. We urgently need your support.

## Thank you

The campaign to restore Christ Church relies on the support of many people. We would like to thank the following who have recently given us support

We are most grateful to the Spitalfields Society for matching the London Borough of Tower Hamlets' grant for repairing the water trough on Commercial Street.

Ashurst Morris Crisp for printing this issue of *Columns* and for other printed material.

We are also grateful for help in kind from Herbert Smith and Linklaters & Alliance; Vail Printers for printing the Hawksmoor London Churches leaflet; Bowne of London for the Friends' supporters leaflet; Libby Spurrier for allowing us to use Charles Maude's photographs of Christ Church.

We would like to thank those who come and help both in the office and at special events. We are particularly grateful to Fiona Ligonnet and Christopher Woodward who provide reliable

## Support

The Friends' Office is run with a small number of staff in order to keep our overhead costs to a minimum. Please contact the Friends' office: 020 7247 0165.

## Volunteers

We need volunteers for work in the office, which might include help with the mailings, and also at our special events.

Our next event is Open House on the 22nd and 23rd September. This is always very popular and we expect between 1500 and 2000 people to visit over the weekend. Please make a note of this in your diary and let us know if you could help with selling cards or refreshments. Thank you.

## Postage

If you or your business could help with postage facilities this would help enormously with our mailings.

## Friends' events 2001



### Visit to Easton Neston and Drayton House

*Thursday 21st June*

There are still a very few tickets left for this Friends' visit that offers a rare opportunity to visit two important houses in Northamptonshire. The first, Drayton House, is of many periods, including a magnificent Baroque façade of the 1700s by one of Inigo Jones' pupils, William Talman. The second, Easton Neston, is the only country house designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor between 1686 and 1702. Our expert guide for the day will be Bruce Bailey, Drayton's Librarian. Meeting at St George Bloomsbury, near Holborn Tube, we shall travel in a comfortable bus, and stop at a country pub for lunch (not included in the ticket price).

Places are limited and will be allocated as received. The cost including bus, entrance fees, guide and notes, is £60 per person. Paid-up Supporters may book at a reduced rate of £50. Please telephone the Friends' office, 020 7247 0165 to see if you can reserve a place.

### Open House

*Saturday and Sunday, 22nd and 23rd September*

Christ Church will once again be open for the Open House weekend. Access to the nave may be limited but the Old Vestry Room, the gardens and the new Crypt chapel will be open.



*Mathew and Juliet Cestar who were married at Christ Church on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2001. Matthew and Juliet invited their friends to make donations to the restoration in lieu of wedding presents. The Friends are most grateful for this generous gesture.*

## Book review

*Andrew Martindale*

### HAWKSMOOR'S LONDON CHURCHES: ARCHITECTURE AND THEOLOGY

by Pierre De La Ruffiniere du Prey.

University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London,  
£24, 2000, 0 226 17301 1

Surprisingly little has been written in recent years about Hawksmoor's London churches, and even less remains in print: the principle source, reprinting many of the architect's letters and drawings, remains Kerry Downes' *Hawksmoor* (2nd edition, 1979), now almost a generation old. It is forty-four years since the Survey of London published their monograph on Spitalfields, which contains a record and analysis of Christ Church that has not since been bettered or even equalled by descriptions of the other five surviving churches that make up Hawksmoor's work for the Commissioners of the Fifty New Churches Act. In such a field Professor du Prey's fine monograph should be particularly welcomed, as it greatly increases the readily available information on the churches, and examines them in a thought-provoking and insightful way.

The churches of St Alphege Greenwich, St Anne Limehouse, St George Bloomsbury, St George in the East, St Mary Woolnoth and Christ Church Spitalfields will be well known to anyone who has even a passing interest in the subject. Professor du Prey's greatest achievement here is to make everyone stop and think about these marvellous buildings again, and to think of them in quite a different light. By fully examining Hawksmoor's training under Wren, and its background in the study of early Christian and pagan buildings, Professor du Prey succeeds in bringing his reader into the circle of highly educated men, and the books they wrote, that are the bedrock of Hawksmoor's designs. The book then fully examines the churches themselves, and the evolution of their design, in the light of that academic background.

This is not a quick, or easy book to read. It contains an immense amount of original research and thought, and reproduces many original sources, particularly drawings and engravings. The marshalling of this information is professionally handled, and the design is well considered. If this reviewer has any criticism, it would be that the quality of the colour photography, which does not achieve the very high standards of the rest of the book. Surely the west front of Christ Church, now looking so magnificent after its restoration, deserves to be better represented than by the pre-cleaning photograph reproduced in this book?

*Andrew Martindale is Casework Secretary at the Georgian Group*

## Personal column

*Richard MacCormac*

Walking past Christ Church, as I have done daily for many years, has not made Hawksmoor's masterwork familiar to me. Its great architectural gestures retain their strange potency and continue to astonish and invite my curiosity. To suddenly be faced with the vast unadorned white flank, with its deeply cut round windows above the double arches of the aisle, blocking the south end of Wilkes Street is so surprising that you might be in Rome or in the Rimini of Alberti's Tempio Malatestiano.

Of Hawksmoor's London churches Christ Church is the only one to command a long axial vista. Turning into Brushfield Street from Bishopsgate you are confronted by an almost overwhelming anthropomorphic presence, and it is interesting to imagine how even more savage this confrontation might have been had the church been built without the portico as originally intended. As it is, the Serlian motif of the portico dominates the West front, and the belfry arch with entablature on each side and tripartite composition above reiterates the portico's great thematic idea.

The portico can also be read as an extension of the volume of the nave out beyond the West front. With the plinths which extend out on each side of the steps and the pilaster-like projections of the north and south flank walls, a powerful sense of the longitudinal rather than centralised character of the design is apparent. It also becomes evident that this is not an architecture made up of separate elements added to one another, porch, spire, chancel, but a composition of visibly interlocking masses. Seen from the west the shoulders of the tower form a massive cross axial plane of masonry rising from the plinth to intersect the longitudinal connection between portico and nave. The effect is amplified by the huge concavities to the north and south of the belfry which deliver a sense of the structure of the tower piercing up through the volume of the building. And this is exactly what happens internally where the masonry core of the tower rising from the entrance is hollowed out at each level to form vestibule, vestry room, and then ringing chamber and belfry emerging above the roof.

Externally, the rising stages of the tower elaborate and resolve the cross axial theme. The recessed core of the tower emerges above the shoulders as a square base for the spire, which in turn consists of two intersecting pyramidal

obelisks topped by a gilded globe, bringing a final resolution to the tremendous forces below.

The interior of Christ Church may not as readily declare the passionate complexity which characterises the exterior but there are equivalent compositional and spatial themes. The seven bays of the nave are intersected by a transept consisting of three bays marked out by clustered columns and piers and above by three coffered barrel vaults on each side. The first and last bays are set beyond the main volume of the nave by screens each consisting of four Corinthian columns supporting entablatures which extend out from the aisles. At the west end this arrangement provides for galleries and frames the organ. At the east end it fulfils the liturgical role of separating the chancel. But Hawksmoor's architectural intentions were also to create spaces within spaces and to use the Corinthian columns and their entablatures to give the volume of the nave a sense of equivalent containment on all sides and to mediate between the nave and the lesser scales of sanctuary and vestibule.

Hawksmoor's first proposed site for the church was at the north end of Brick Lane where it would have been at the periphery of eighteenth century Spitalfields. On its present site the church stands as a focus for the extraordinarily mixed community of co-existing interests, ranging from the wealth of the City to the poverty beyond Brick Lane and from Whitechapel to Bethnal Green Road. The restoration of Christ Church, its role as place of worship, its increasing use as a venue for music and cultural activity and its architectural presence make this strange masterwork a fantastic symbol for the regenerative energy and creativity around it.

*Sir Richard MacCormac is a partner of the architectural practice MacCormac, Jamieson, Pritchard whose offices are in Spitalfields.*

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The Old Vestry Room, Christ Church, Fournier Street,  
London E1 6QE Telephone 020 7247 0165