

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.

After the restoration: what next?

With the successful completion of the interior of Christ Church, the Friends have achieved the largest of their original aims since they were founded in 1976: to restore the building and bring it back into use. The Friends have raised and spent a staggering £10 million for this purpose. Building on this success, we are now able to concentrate our attentions on the other projects which still need to be undertaken.

Refurbishing the crypt

The crypt which runs under the entire length of the church needs extensive refurbishment. It has an important role in supporting services and events in the nave and when this work has been done the crypt will form an essential part of the implementation of the business plan for Christ Church.

Between 1729 and 1852 the crypt was used for over a thousand burials. These were researched and largely cleared in the 1980s in the well publicised 'Spitalfields Project'. Earlier, in the 1960s, part of the crypt was cleared and was used by the Spitalfields Crypt Trust as a rehabilitation centre. The Crypt Trust moved out in 1999 to purpose built premises close by in Shoreditch. In 1998 the Friends raised the money to make a chapel within the crypt in which the Parish could worship during the restoration works upstairs.

The space under the church is very large and the demands on it can be many. In the last six months, with the church reopened, the possible uses of the space have been further clarified. These are currently being considered in order to form a brief, a basis for a working plan for the project.

Restoring the Richard Bridge organ

The other major capital project in the Friends' plans is the reinstatement of the 1735 Richard Bridge organ. The Bridge organ was one of the most ambitious organs of the eighteenth century and, although altered in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, much of the original instrument survives. In 1997 the Friends arranged for all the working parts including the pipes to be dismantled and removed for safe keeping while



Signing the visitors' book: His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales visited Christ Church on 24th February to see the finished restoration and to meet the professional team and many of the craftsmen who worked on the project as well as members of the parish and local school children.

the building works were in progress. Now that these have been completed, the Friends and the PCC are turning their attention to the reinstatement of this magnificent instrument.

We are delighted that John Scott, formerly organist at St Paul's Cathedral and now at St Thomas Church, New York has agreed to become a patron of the Friends. The Friends have appointed Dr Nicholas Thistlethwaite as consultant for the project. He has previously advised on the restoration of several historic organs including those at Eton College Chapel, Danson House, and St Anne Limehouse. He is a member of the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England, and a former Secretary and Chairman of the British Institute of Organ Studies. He is currently Canon Precentor at Guildford Cathedral.

The restoration plans are being discussed and consolidated and we hope to be able to give you details of the final proposal in the coming months. It is, however, absolutely clear that Christ Church has an instrument of international significance and that this will be a most exciting project. Meanwhile, supporters

may be interested to hear that the Friends have already raised about £40,000 towards the work.

The monuments to Peck and Ladbroke

Visitors to Christ Church will have noticed that work needs to be done on the two large memorials on either side of the Sanctuary. The monument on the south side commemorates Edward Peck who lived in Spitalfields, worked as a silk weaver and was one of the commissioners for the Fifty New Churches. The monument on the north side is by John Flaxman RA and commemorates Sir Robert Ladbroke.

Both monuments are very dirty and require some repair work; one of them shows signs of corrosion of its metal cramps and this must be investigated. The Friends are seeking advice from the Council for the Care of Churches for the best specification for their repair and cleaning.

Chairs

The appeal to raise money for the new chairs for the nave continues successfully: we have been able to buy and take delivery of the first 120 chairs but we still need to buy 320 more for the nave and eventually 100 for the crypt. Each chair costs £160 and donors are able to make a dedication for their chair which will be recorded in a specially commissioned hand written book.

If you can support any of these appeals, please donate by completing the form included with this issue.

Maintain the link

Please consider a gift to the Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields in your will and so ensure that the work of the Friends continues and that Christ Church will be maintained for future generations. Many people contact us because of the link that they have with Christ Church through their forbears and it is this continuity over the years that will provide the strongest safeguard for the building and its preservation for future generations. To be valuable to us, your gift does not have to be big. You have already seen how the support and enthusiasm of many individuals made possible the magnificent restoration, just finished.

Legacies to registered charities are exempt from inheritance tax. You may wish to consider leaving The Friends a residue of your estate having provided for loved ones.

If you have already included the Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields in your will, please let us know so that we can acknowledge your generosity and foresight. Thank you.

Please contact the Friends' office for further details.

Floor Appeal

Contributors to this appeal, which together with the matched Heritage Lottery funding raised over £100,000, are being recorded in a specially commissioned hand written book. This book is nearly finished and we hope to have news of this and how to view it in the next edition of *Columns*.

Events

A Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving to celebrate the reopening of Christ Church was held in Christ Church on 2nd December with the Bishop of London (patron to the Friends) preaching. It was particularly appropriate and pleasing that this service included the induction, by the Archdeacon of Hackney, of our new Rector, Andy Rider.

There was a retiring collection for the ongoing works at Christ Church. The Friends would like to thank all those who contributed so generously.

Joint Lecture with the Ecclesiological Society

On December 7th 2004 the Friends joined with the Ecclesiological Society to present the annual Stephen Dykes Bower Memorial Lecture at Christ Church. 'Christ Church Spitalfields: Hawksmoor's rediscovered interior' was a fascinating lecture illustrated with slides and given by Red (A.D.) Mason, architect to the restoration. He outlined the documentary and physical evidence obtained over twenty-five years on which the restoration of the interior has been based, and described the discoveries he made during the course of the building works which threw light on the approach of Hawksmoor's craftsmen.

Forthcoming Events

Hawksmoor's Six London Churches Bus Tour

The tour on 21st May 2005 is now fully booked. We hope to arrange another in the autumn this year. Please write to the Friends' office if you would be interested in taking this unique opportunity to see six of his finest works in a day and to have an expert guide to explain their history and significance.

The annual **Spitalfields Festival**, 6–24 June 2005, has returned to Christ Church and will be holding many of its concerts in the church. For further information call the Festival Hotline 020 7377 1362 or visit www.spitalfieldsfestival.org.uk

If you would be interested in helping the Friends at these concerts to sell cards and publicise work still to be done at Christ Church please contact the Friends office 020 7859 3035 for further details.

New Publication

The Friends have produced a small full colour booklet, in celebration of the re-opening of the church, called 'Christ Church Spitalfields', published by Jarrold Publishing (formerly Pitkin). The booklet has a forward by the Bishop of London (patron of The Friends) and contains a short history of the church and its restoration with information on the organ and other features in the church.

You can purchase this guide from the church or direct from the Friends' office. The booklet costs £3.50 + £1 p&p. Please send a cheque for £4.50 made payable to The Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields. All proceeds will go towards the work of the Friends.

Christ Church opening times

Christ Church is currently open to visitors on Sundays, 11 to 4 pm, and on Tuesdays, 11 am to 4 pm. It is hoped soon to extend opening hours to include Mondays and Fridays. Please call Christ Church office 020 7247 7202 before you make your journey.

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: 020 7377 6793, or visit 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.

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.

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.

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 £100 and over

Artemis Trust
Geoffrey A Collens
J E Dallas
Glossop Pryor Foundation*
John F Kent
Ken Potter*
Andrew Soundy
Stephen Cockburn Charitable Trust
W T J Griffin Charitable Settlement

Gifts of £200 and over

Felicity Crowther
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Gillian Figures
In memory of Michael Abbott
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Jeanne Golay-Evans and Peter Evans*
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Bow Park Investments Co. Ltd*
In memory of W I Massil
Dr Geoffrey Tyack*
In memory of Mrs E Tyack
Philip Vracas

Gifts of £1000 and over

Eleanor Murray*
Hammerson plc

*For the Richard Bridge Organ Appeal

Personal column

Anyone finding themselves in the north-west area of the vestibule at Christ Church may come upon a large memorial slab set in the floor. As it has always been the only memorial thus placed in the church, some may even wonder whom it commemorates, and what may account for such apparent distinction. At first glance, it appears to mark the burial of a nine-month old boy, and of a brother and sister who died young. But further reading will show that their parents, Isaac and Judith Lefevre, were also buried here, and the slab goes on to record a number of their often distinguished descendants. But who was this Isaac Lefevre?

He was the son of Huguenot refugees from Bolbec in Normandy, and had come to England in 1685 with his parents when he was only six weeks old, and they had settled at Canterbury. But before he was thirteen, both his parents were dead. He, with his brother and sister, were brought to London by a Huguenot aunt living in Spitalfields, and he was apprenticed to a dyer, his father's trade. Obviously successful, he started taking on his own apprentices, and was sufficiently respected in the community to be elected an elder of the Huguenot 'Church of the Artillery', St Jean, in 1718.

When one of his sons died early in 1731, one suspects that he was moved by something more than grief when he purchased a family vault. Here, completed less than eighteen months before, was Hawksmoor's magnificent church, which now dominated Spitalfields and its largely Huguenot population. What better way to enhance one's prestige than by being one of the very first to secure such a burial site?

Around that time, Isaac was evidently also gaining increased respect in the Dyers' Company. He became a member of the Court in 1739, and was elected renter warden in 1743, which meant that he was responsible for the Company's accounts.

This cannot have been an easy task, as at that time the Dyers were in trouble with the Court of Aldermen for claiming that they were too short of funds for them to play their part in the Lord Mayor's Show, an explanation unacceptable to the Aldermen, who insisted that the Dyers did their duty.

Not long after this, Isaac became ill, missed many meetings, and died in 1746. By this time, his sons were all well-established, and had left Spitalfields. Three of them, besides other business interests, became distillers and, it has reluctantly to be said, made a great deal of money by exploiting the 'gin craze' that swept mid-eighteenth century London. The eldest, John, appears on the memorial (though buried elsewhere). Neither he nor his brothers had sons so that the Lefevre name was about to die out. So John, who by that time owned significant property, left this to his only daughter on condition that her husband, an MP, changed his name from Shaw to Shaw-Lefevre. Four months later, John died from the consequences of cutting his finger-nail too short.

The Shaw-Lefevres had three sons, all of them distinguished: Charles, the eldest, later Lord Eversley, was for the eighteen years from 1839 to 1857 a noted Speaker of the Commons, and another was Vice-Chancellor of London University. But, again, none of them had sons, and the Lefevre name only continued as a prefix to the surname of a daughter's already double-barrelled husband.

Had it not been for this slab and what it reveals (for Isaac Lefevre was my great-great-great-great-grandfather), I might never have pursued a study which has now accumulated considerable information about at least eight Spitalfields families. So: don't disregard memorial inscriptions. You never know where they may lead you!

Peter Currie

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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.

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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:

£ 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. We will process Standing Orders and forward them to your bank. **delete as applicable*

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<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/pdfs/ir65.htm>

Please allocate my donation towards the restoration of:

- Christ Church Spitalfields
- The Richard Bridge Organ

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

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