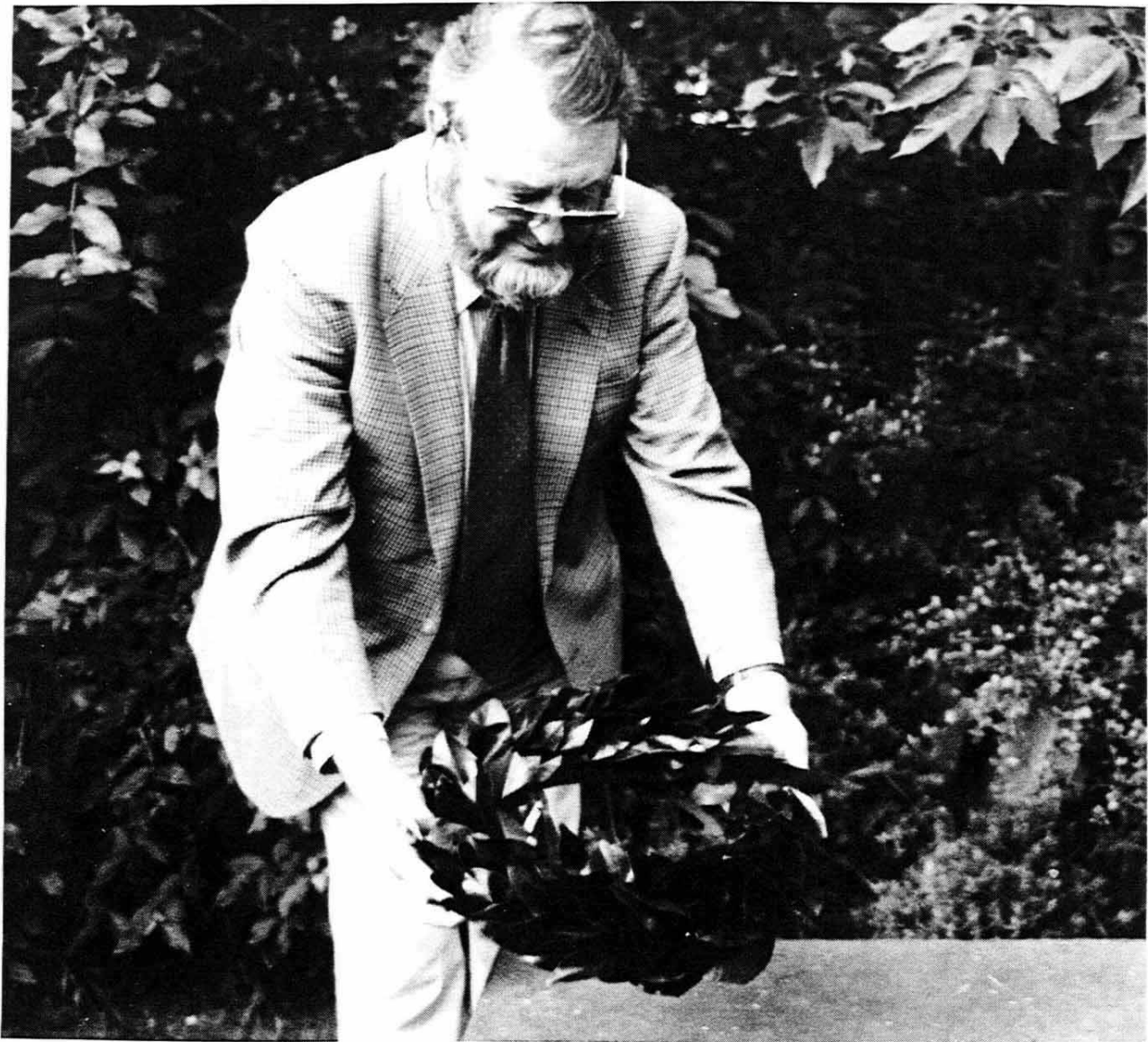


Number 8 Autumn 1997

# Columns

The Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields  
Registered Charity 276056

Columns is the supporter's bulletin for the Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields. The Friends are leading the restoration of Nicholas Hawksmoor's church, regarded as one of Europe's most important Baroque churches. Please support us by subscribing or making a donation. Use the coupon sent with this newsletter or telephone 0171-247 0165.



**Donald Buttress, Surveyor of the Fabric at Westminster Abbey, laying a laurel wreath on behalf of the Friends at the tomb of Nicholas Hawksmoor.**

Hawksmoor was one of Donald Buttress's predecessors as Surveyor of the Fabric at Westminster Abbey, from 1723 until his death in 1736. During this period Hawksmoor designed the Abbey's world-famous west towers, his last major work. These towers recently completed restoration under the direction of the present Surveyor. Nicholas Hawksmoor was buried at his own request at the old parish church of Shenley, Hertfordshire. His plain chest tomb bears an inscription by Andrews Jelf, who worked with Hawksmoor on many projects. The old church at Shenley has been declared redundant in favour of a newer building a mile away and it has been converted to residential use; so Hawksmoor's grave is now in a private garden, hidden from public view by a hedge. The Friends visited the architect's tomb this summer by kind permission of the owners of the site, during a tour with Hawksmoor connections on the Friends' 21st anniversary celebrations.

## Christ Church Gardens railings

September 1997:

The new Portland stone plinth being drilled to receive the balusters of the new iron railings ↓



A gate pier being lowered into place. ↑



➡ The new iron gate, weighing nearly a quarter of a ton, wedged in position for final fixing. The design of the gates and railings was recreated by Project architects Whitfield Partners from surviving fragments and archive photographs in the National Monuments Record. The railings and gates were cast in moulds specially made by the ironwork contractors Dorothea Restorations.

### Hawksmoor's steps to be rebuilt

The grand double flight of steps into Christ Church from Christ Church Gardens - formerly the graveyard - is to be rebuilt with generous grant aid received from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Spitalfields Market Community Trust.

The Market Community Trust was set up by the Corporation of London and the Spitalfields Development Group when the former fruit and vegetable market was relocated and the site was then sold for redevelopment. Work on the steps will begin on site early in 1998. The total cost will be £280,000, and the two major grants will be topped up by gifts from Friends Supporters: for every £25 the Friends receive in gifts from Supporters we can draw down £100 further in grants for which we must find matching funding.

The steps were demolished in the early nineteenth century, probably to accommodate burials in the churchyard and the crypt vaults.

At present there are unsightly temporary scaffolding stairs on the site as a fire escape for concert-goers and users of the church. Replacing the steps in masonry will provide a permanent fire exit and is part of the work necessary to enable the use of church for public events and concerts, for which a secondary fire exit is mandatory.

The South steps will complete the restoration of Hawksmoor's elevation, which the Friends commenced in the 1980s with the removal of the Victorian window alterations. The double flight of steps and their large balustrades will measure 36 feet long and 16 feet high. They will be built with reference to Hawksmoor's original drawings, which the Friends' architects Whitfield Partners have carefully been researching.

The steps will be finished in limestone taken from quarries just a few hundred yards from the Isle of Portland quarries from which the stone was originally brought in the eighteenth century for the construction of the original steps.



October 1997:

The Rector of Christ Church, Revd Paul Bowtell, and the Mayor of Tower Hamlets, Cllr J. Ramapoop, cut a ribbon to open Christ Church Gardens gates.



## In Brief

The Friends' **Christmas cards** have sold out in less than two weeks this year, with many purchasers taking advantage of our bulk discounts. Our printers are unable to print more in time for Christmas so we are sorry if you were disappointed – and better luck next year

Friends Chairman **Eric Elstob** has enjoyed excellent notices for his book *Travels in a Europe Restored*, his personal account of the liberalisation of Eastern Europe. We are delighted to say that several journalists have picked up from the book that Eric is also involved with the restoration of Christ Church, and have also given the Friends' appeal a good plug where it counts: on the business pages of the broadsheet newspapers.

Hawksmoor fans will want to see the **exhibition** currently at the Heinz Gallery, 21 Portman Square, London W1 (entrance in Gloucester Place) of Hawksmoor's designs for the redevelopment of the centre of Oxford. These exciting designs are from College and University collections so the opportunity to see them brought together and on public display for the first time is not to be missed. The exhibition continues until 20 December 1997, and the gallery is now open for longer periods on Saturdays. Telephone 0171-307 3698 for information on opening times.

We are grateful to **Keith Whitehead** at Bollom's paint shop in Old Spitalfields Market for selling, in aid of the Friends' appeal, fragments of stone removed during repairs to the tower of Christ Church. The stone pieces are very fractured and come in odd shapes and sizes - which is why they are waste products from the repair process. However, some visitors appreciate the thought that the stones now on their rockeries have such an architecturally distinguished provenance. To check if any are still left, telephone 0171-375 0497.

*Spitalfields Winter Festival - Concerts by Candlelight*, organised by the Spitalfields Festival in the incomparable setting of Christ Church, runs from 16 to 23 December 1997 and includes a gospel choir, polyphony and carols. The Festival telephone hotline for tickets and information is 0171-377 1362.

We know many **Supporters** find receiving a volume of unsolicited mail-shots increasingly tiresome so The Friends never sell, rent or loan the names of our Supporters to either commercial firms or charities. We are legally obliged to announce that our Supporters' names and addresses are held on our computer and that The Friends of Christ Church is registered under the Data Protection Act. (This registration is required by statute; even though we are a fundraising charity we still have to pay for it!).

**What will you leave?** Leaving a legacy to the Friends, a registered charity, is a way of supporting the Friends which will not cost you a penny during your lifetime. Bequests may be left to the Friends Fund for restoration works or to the Upkeep Fund from which only income is spent. Bequests to the Upkeep Fund therefore continue to give indefinite benefit, year after year, to assist in maintaining Hawksmoor's great church. If you would like to discuss remembering the Friends in your will please contact us in complete confidence. As a registered charity, bequests may reduce duty payable on an estate; please note we are not permitted by law to give tax planning advice.

**Thanks** to Banker's Trust for photocopying this issue of Columns for us, and to David Souden for laying it out; to Hugh de Wet for allowing us to use his painting of Christ Church for our fastest-ever selling Christmas card; to our volunteers Ceri George, Fiona Ligonnet and Christopher Woodward for their continuing help in the Friends' office.

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