

Columns

NUMBER 39 • SPRING 2015

THE FRIENDS OF CHRIST CHURCH SPITALFIELDS
REGISTERED CHARITY NO 276056

1735 Richard Bridge organ restored

Supporters of the Friends will be pleased to know that the 1735 Richard Bridge organ has been successfully restored. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, the sound of the organ, unplayed since the 1950s, will once again resound around Nicholas Hawksmoor's marvellous interior of Christ Church.

In celebration there will be a Gala Opening Recital and Dedication at Christ Church on Tuesday 30th June given by John Scott, Patron of the Friends, renowned Organist and Director of Music at Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue, New York and formerly of St Paul's Cathedral.

You will know through the many appeals and updates via this newsletter that the organ project has been a complex and demanding one: we owe much to the dedicated team of professionals who have achieved a remarkable restoration.

To recap a little: there are of course many church organs in England, but the Richard Bridge organ is of special significance. It was built for Christ Church in 1735, six years after the church was consecrated. Bridge was one of the leading craftsmen of his day and the instrument was his musical tour de force. It was also the largest organ in England for over one hundred years and is one of the largest to survive from the age of Handel. When Christ Church was in danger of demolition in the 1950s, the organ had already deteriorated and was no longer playable. After the successful restoration of the church in 2004, fund-raising and planning for the organ began. The pipes, stops and pedals had been removed for safekeeping during the church's lengthy restoration, and research showed that enough of the original pipework remained to re-instate the 1735 scheme. By using an uncompromising approach to the restoration, we have been able to incorporate the original 18th century character of this historic instrument – indeed, Handel himself would recognise the Georgian soundscape!

The contract to carry out this work was given to William Drake, a renowned historic organ builder, who had built or restored a significant number of organs including those at St Paul's Deptford, St Giles-in-the-Fields, St Paul's Cathedral OBE Chapel and the Ballroom organ at Buckingham Palace. Sadly William Drake died in 2014 after a short illness. It is a credit to his memory that the team of expert craftsmen, led by Joost de Boer, that he had assembled and trained were able to continue the project and to fulfill the contract.

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, or telephone the Friends' office, 020 7247 4270, or visit our website: www.christchurchspitalfields.org



The restored organ case with gilded pipes – April 2015

The first major part of the project was to restore the organ case. Once scaffolding had been erected and it was possible to view the case at close quarters, it became evident how badly cracked and riddled with woodworm it was. Also clear was the exquisite detail of the limewood carving, largely unnoticed under its Victorian brown varnish. Bridge's original decorative scheme has been reinstated to stunning effect, the limewood now standing out with its rich lead-based eggshell finish which matched the original. The restored, gilded and painted crown and mitres have been returned to the top of the case. Their size only becomes apparent when seen close up, but seen from ground level they are perfectly in scale with the rest of the case.

Much of the recent work has concentrated on the voicing and tuning of the instrument. After construction or repair as necessary in the workshop, the pipes are checked on a voicing machine for preliminary regulation. Back in the church and installed on the appropriate soundboard, the 'voicer' carries out the final regulation and tuning. This is highly skilled work and demands considerable concentration and (as far as possible) silence within the building. The extraordinary range and quantity of reed stops is part of what

makes the Christ Church organ so remarkable. The painstaking research on surviving material carried out by William Drake Ltd has enabled them to restore and, where necessary, recreate the ten reed shanks from 1735, 'an extraordinary and unique set of tonal colours for an English organ of this period', according to William McVicker, organ consultant for the restoration.

We continue to be extremely grateful to our many Supporters worldwide for their generosity which has made this exemplary restoration possible.

The Friends are saddened to report the death of

Elizabeth Young, Lady Kennet

14 April 1923 – 30 November 2014

Christine Whaite, Chair of the Friends writes:

The survival of Christ Church Spitalfields probably owes more to Lady Kennet than to any other single person. She was instrumental in establishing the Hawksmoor Committee in response to a real threat to demolish the church. She assembled an influential group chaired by John Betjeman 'to bring the architecture of Nicholas Hawksmoor before the public eye and to ensure that money will be found' to secure its future. By 1960 Christ Church had been saved from immediate threat.

Lady Kennet was educated in Switzerland, France and England and won an Exhibition to Somerville College, Oxford where she read PPE. She served as a Wren during the war before working with naturalist Peter Scott to set up the Severn Wildfowl Trust. She married Wayland Young, later Lord Kennet, in 1948.

She was a poet, artist, award-winning author, an activist and prolific commentator on architecture, conservation, defence and arms control, more recently through her blog, *Mrs Elizabeth Young*. Lord Owen, her friend, said 'She had a deep intellectual understanding of the issues and became a world expert.'

Lady Kennet was an active member of many organisations, including the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches, the Advisory Committee for the Protection of the Sea, The Royal United Services Institution, the Royal Institute for International Affairs, Chatham House and the International Institute for Strategic Studies. She was respected as a ferocious campaigner for peace, in particular regarding weapons of mass destruction.

Lady Kennet remained an active Patron to The Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields. In July 2013 she wrote 'I happened to see Christ Church Spitalfields from a distance last Sunday, looking marvelous; and then St George in the East, looking wonderfully fanciful – is there any thought going on about a proper rebuild? Ought there to be a revival of the Hawksmoor Committee? Alas, not for me – I'm ninety – but for someone who realises the glory awaiting.'

Lord Kennet died in 2009. Lady Kennet is survived by her son Thoby and five daughters, Easter, Emily, Mopsa, Louisa and Zoe.



S R B HUMPHREYS

Repair of organ side tower pipe shade carving

Travel Bursary and Gala Recital

The restoration of Christ Church supported a wide variety of skilled craftsmanship (cf *Columns* 23). The business of building organs requires almost as many skills all rolled into one. The pipe organ builder must be adroit in the practice of wood, leather and metal work, engineering and practical building work as well as being, above all, an accomplished musician.

In recognition of this, and to support this specialised work, the Trustees are launching a Travel Bursary for pipe organ builders to encourage excellence and research in organ building. The launch coincides with the Gala Opening Recital on June 30 and proceeds will go towards the fund.

Forthcoming organ concerts in 2015

Tuesday 30 June at 7pm Gala Opening Recital: booking details at www.christchurchspitalfields.org

Monday 13 July at 1pm St. Albans International Organ Festival: recital by James O'Donnell.

Tuesday 14 July at 10.45am and 2.30pm St. Albans International Organ Competition 2

Thursday 30 July at 7.30pm
Concert in memory of William Drake.

Thursday 1 October at 7.30pm Recital, organist tbc.

Thursday 5 November at 7.30pm Gerard Brooks, curator organist, with instrumental ensemble.

The concert on 30 June is presented by the Friends. The remainder are arranged by the Parish and for further information please consult the church's website: www.ccsitalfields.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 £30 (£35 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.

Standing Order

Your bank and account details:

To Bank
of
.....
.....
..... Bank address
Sort code _ _ - _ _ - _ _
Account no _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

I enclose my cheque for:

☐ £30 ☐ £50 ☐ £100 ☐ £250 ☐ £1,000
☐ other £ ...

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

Please complete the sections below:

giftaid it

☐ I am a UK taxpayer and would like The Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields to treat all donations that I make as Gift Aid donations. I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. Other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. The Friends will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I have given since April 2008.

This declaration applies to ☐ past ☐ present ☐ future donations : please tick as appropriate.

Signature

Date

You can give money in several ways:

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

Or, by completing the appropriate parts of this page:

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

Please pay to C. Hoare & Co of 37 Fleet Street, London EC4P 4DQ, sort code 15-99-00 for the credit of The Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields account no. 69175420 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:

Please allocate my donation towards the restoration of:

- ☐ Christ Church Spitalfields
☐ The Richard Bridge Organ

Name

Address

.....

.....

Postcode

Telephone

Email address

The Friends would like to acknowledge gifts of £30 or more in *Columns*, but if you wish to remain anonymous please tick the box below:

☐ Please do not print my name in *Columns*

Data Protection Act 1988: 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

Thank you

The Friends are grateful for the generosity of the many individuals and organisations who support the restoration and Organ appeals.

We are particularly grateful to TechHub who have generously provided the Friends with office space. With TechHub's help, and law firm Ashurst's previously, we have kept our office overheads low.

We have run two major projects, the restorations of the church and the organ with a small part time staff and a number of volunteers. This help has been crucial to our success.

Thank you to our volunteers who help both in the office and at special events. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who prefer to remain anonymous and those who give by standing order, thereby saving on administrative costs.

We would also like to thank the following for their recent donations:



S R B HUMPHREYS

The complex mechanisms inside the restored organ case

Gifts of £30 and over

John Bowles *
 Eric Brownbill *
 Revd Robin Burgess
 James Dale *
 Anthony J L Day
 MLG Dillon *
 RP Fagg
 F Leo Grant *
 Mrs E Griffin *
 Prof Sean Hilton
 Arabella Hobson *
 Mrs Jane Holland *
 Peter Jamieson *
 Roland Jeffery *
In memory of Eleanor Murray
 David Lawson *
In memory of my Dad, T R Lawson
 Harry Mathews *
 E A Newlands
 Mrs Zara Perry *
 Martin Plaut
 Dr Patrick Polden
 JD Rimington
 Mrs HF Roberts
 Peter Smith *
 SK Stobbs *
 Dr HRT Summerson
 Jan Thornton
 NE Trippett
 John C Walton *

Gifts of £100 and over

The Byrne Charitable Trust *
 Prof Dick Clements *
 David Cubitt *
 Prof George K Freeman *
 Mrs M Harrison
 Mark Hobhouse *
 Nadine Morgan *
 R Prescott *
 Patrick and Jane Russill * *In memory*
of Nicholas Danby & Ralph Downes
 The Sainer Charity *
 John Scott-Oldfield *

Gifts of £200 and over

Julian Cazalet *
 Sir Peter Cazalet *
 The Peguera Trust
 Mrs Clare Stevens *
 Peter Stormonth Darling
 Mrs M Summerson *
 Patrick Waldron

Gift of £1,000 and over

Nigel Prevost *

Gift of £10,000

Hamish Parker *

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

Published by the Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields
 Registered Charity No 276056
 Postal address: 14-22 Elder Street, London E1 6BT
 Telephone 020 7247 4270
friends@christchurchspitalfields.org
www.christchurchspitalfields.org