

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.

Please support us by subscribing or making a donation. Use the form with this issue to make a donation, or telephone the Friends' office, 020 7859 3035, or visit our website: www.christchurchspitalfields.org

Christ Church organ to be restored by William Drake

For one hundred years, the organ at Christ Church, built in 1735, was the largest organ in England. In the 1950s, when the almost derelict church was closed to the public and was in danger of being pulled down, the instrument fell silent. Its restoration is a huge task. The colossal job ahead will first involve restoring the magnificent and exuberant 18th century case. A beautiful and rare piece of 18th century furniture, it is the size of a silk weaver's house in Fournier Street.

The organ was renowned for its sheer quality of sound, and there is enough evidence to reconstruct the organ to Bridge's original plan with confidence. The work, however, will be complex involving old and new:

- many of the two thousand pipes need to be reconstructed and all of them must be carefully restored
- the swell box, bellows and pedal board will have to be built anew
- there is a much intricate and decorative work, such as gilding of pipes and crafting of stops and keys.

Once again Christ Church will be home to highly skilled craftsmen working over three years to recreate this extraordinary instrument.



The presently empty organ case at the west end of the nave

This major project requires major funds. The total cost of the restoration will be just over £1,000,000. Support has been pledged from around the world. The Rector, PCC and The Friends have signed an agreement with William Drake to carry out the work. Please join us and help by giving generously.



Rev Andy Rider (rector), William Drake (organ builder) and Christine Whaite (chair of the trustees of The Friends) sign the

contract for the restoration of the Richard Bridge organ in the Old Vestry Room. The back of the empty organ case is beyond.

The Christ Church organ as living history

William McVicker

After the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660 an English cultural revolution began. Influences from Europe – particularly Holland, France and Italy – were especially prevalent. The grand architectural classical style favoured by Louis XIV at Versailles also found favour with English architects; in music, the French influence eventually waned; Handel arrived in London in 1712, fresh from Italy, favouring the Corelli style peppered with his own Germanic contrapuntal idiom; his blend of European influences helped reshape the English musical scene.

Fed by this rich vein of fresh blood, the Spitalfields organ was born in 1735; it is both a confident assimilation of foreign influences and a bold statement in its own right of the English organ-building style of early Georgian England.

Its value is immense – not least because it is a remarkable survival from a hugely important period of English musical history, but because it is the jewel in the crown of Hawksmoor's ecclesiastical masterpiece, and because it represents a missing piece in a jigsaw of eighteenth-century musical culture which keyboard musicians are only just coming to terms with. Like Handel, the Bridge organ had a huge influence over a generation of English composers and was talk of the town – and will be once again when its restoration is complete. The instrument's qualities will allow not only the performance of a wide range of organ music from a wide range of periods, but it will allow us to understand how the English and European repertoire of the Georgian era relate to one another. The Bridge organ is living history and will turn heads once again, just as it did some 275 years ago.

Dr William McVicker is consultant to the organ project together with Dr Nicholas Thistlethwaite.

Visiting Christ Church

The opening times at Christ Church have been extended and are now:

Sunday: Service 10.30AM, open to public 1AM–4PM.

Monday: 11AM–2PM if not in use for service or event*

Tuesday: 11AM–4PM (12 noon: guided tour sometimes available*)

Wednesday–Friday 11AM–2PM, if not in use for service or event*

*Please call in advance to check: 020 7426 5360.

Postcards and publications are on sale at the church on Tuesdays and Sundays.

The Parish is organising volunteers to be on duty in the church and sell cards and publications. If you can spare an hour or two on a weekly or monthly basis, or you would like some more information please contact Kim Gooding, 020 7426 5360, or at:

welcomeofficer@christchurchspitalfields.org.uk

William Drake, organ builder

William Drake is one of the most renowned organ restorers in Europe today. Following an apprenticeship abroad, he established a workshop in Buckfastleigh, Devon, in 1974 in conjunction with the John Loosemore Centre for the study of organ performance and early music. The teaching programme at the Centre was discontinued in 1988, but Drake continues to operate from a complex of buildings in Buckfastleigh which includes a redundant chapel.

The firm currently has a staff of five in addition to William Drake, including craftsmen from Holland and France.

Since its foundation, the firm's work has focused principally on the restoration of historic English organs and the building of new instruments in historic styles. The latter include commissions for the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft in the Palace of Westminster, Trinity College of Music, Greenwich, and (to be completed immediately before the Spitalfields restoration), the OBE Chapel in St Paul's Cathedral.

Drake has restored or reconstructed a significant number of historic organs including Lulworth Castle Chapel, Dorset (1780–5), St Paul, Deptford (c. 1745), St Anne, Limehouse (1851), St Giles-in-the-Fields, London (1734, 1856), Christ's Chapel of God's Gift, Dulwich (1760), and the Ball Room organ in Buckingham Palace (1818, 1855). This last contract led to his appointment as an Organ Builder to Her Majesty The Queen.

William Drake therefore brings to the Spitalfields project a wealth of experience and an unsurpassed reputation for work of the highest quality. The reinstatement of the Richard Bridge organ in Christ Church promises to be a landmark in the field of restoration opening up all sorts of possibilities for the performance and study of English keyboard music of the Georgian era.

October 2009

Dates for your diary

Gabrieli Ensemble: concert at Christ Church

Tuesday 3 November at 7.30pm

Songs of Farewell: contrasts music of mourning and consolation from the ancient to modern.

Details at www.gabrieli.com

Spitalfields Music (formerly Spitalfields Festival) brings a short series of eclectic musical performances to Spitalfields this winter including:

Stile Antico: concert at Christ Church

Thursday 10 December 7–8pm

Early Music vocal ensemble Stile Antico perform Thomas Tallis' magnificent 7-part mass, written for the combined choirs of the Spanish and English Chapels Royal in 1554.

Arrive early and hear the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths ring Grandsire Triples on the Christ Church bells (6.15–7pm).

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.

Standing Order

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of
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Account no

I enclose my cheque for:

£25 £30 £50 £250 £1,000
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Please make cheques payable to:
The Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields.

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You can give money in several ways:

- by payroll giving through Give As You Earn
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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.

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. 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

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 Hernon 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

Miss J Borrow *
Mr E Brownbill *
Mr A Burton *
Mr R P Fagg
Mr N J Fogg *
Canon D Garlick *
Mrs B A Glayzer *
Mrs E Griffin *
Mr P M Kershaw *
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Mr D McKay
Mr J D Rimington *
Mrs H F Roberts
Ms A Shannon *
Mr R Thomson
Mr P Vracas
Mr J C Walton *
Prof P C Wilkinson
Mr J F Wong *

Gifts of £100 and over

Mr G E Allan *
The Byrne Charitable Trust *
Mr R Cunningham *In memory of Raphael Samuel*
Mr R J Jeffery * *In memory of Donald Findlay*
The Modiano Charitable Trust
The Sainer Charity *
Mr P R Smith *
Mr & Mrs A Watson *
Ms J Weir *

Gifts of £200 and over

Mr C J Cazalet
Sir Peter Cazalet
Mr J A Hill
Mrs P Pinder
Mr A G Williams *

Gifts of £500 and over

The Leathersellers' Company Charitable Fund *
Mr P R Taylor *

Gifts of £1000 and over

Mr W L Banks *
Mr & Mrs D Cade *
Miss E Murray *

Gifts of £5000 and over

The estate of the late Mr Robert J Davies

*partly or fully for the Richard Bridge Organ Appeal

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