



The Rt Revd Mark Sisk, Bishop of New York, leads the prayers at the Blessing and Ground-breaking Ceremony to mark the beginning of the building project

BLESSINGS READ AS THE RENEWAL OF ST MARTIN'S BEGINS

Over 100 people turned out early to witness the symbolic start of the Renewal of St Martin-in-the-Fields building project in February - an affair complete with songs, shovels and party-poppers!

Despite the cold, it was hard to deny the warm and enthusiastic atmosphere at the Blessing and Ground-breaking Ceremony. The choir sang on the church portico as St Martin's clergy welcomed guests as they battled the near-freezing temperatures. Churchwardens greeted many honoured visitors including the Lord Mayor of Westminster, the Bishop and Archdeacon of New York and the Archdeacon of Charing Cross. To the sounds of a brass quartet from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, the group then processed onto the building site to join St Martin-in-the-Fields Development Trust Chairman, Ian Henderson. They enjoyed blessings read by the Bishop of New York, Rabbi

Alexandra Wright from the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in St John's Wood, and St Martin's Churchwarden, Jeff Claxton. Unfortunately, Imam Shahid Hussein could not attend, due to illness, but his intended blessing for the Renewal Project is included inside.

The ceremony came to a close as Andrew Wyllie, Chief Executive of building contractor Costain, presented St Martin's with a commemorative silver salver to mark the occasion. The Vicar led the crowd in prayer - and then popper-popping - as all were invited to turn a shovel of earth to the sound of the choir singing and brass quartet booming. The ceremony was followed with a warm-up breakfast in the Gallery in the Crypt.

The upbeat celebration for the start of the building work has set the tone for the project; now well into its first phase with the clearing of Church Path and the

old market area to the north of the church. All facilities are scheduled to remain open to the public until early 2007, and from then we will endeavor to keep disruption to a minimum. Now that demolition and construction have begun, the real work starts for the campaign team, which has shifted into a higher gear to help those interested in supporting the project to find the most rewarding way to get involved.

The ceremony continued to warm the hearts of some even after Costain had moved the barriers back and got to work. The campaign team were delighted to hear that one long term friend of the project was so moved by the breaking of the earth that they immediately increased their pledged donation to the project by tenfold!

Now that's something to celebrate!



A SNAPSHOT OF THE EVENT

All photos of the Blessing and Ground-breaking Ceremony
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The Choir of St Martin-in-the-Fields sings on the portico



The Rt Revd Mark Sisk and The Rt Worshipful the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Councillor Tim Joiner



Ian Henderson CBE, Chairman of St Martin-in-the-Fields Development Trust, welcomes guests to the Ground-breaking Ceremony:

"...Literally hundreds of people have been involved in preparing for this moment. It has been a remarkable work of human endeavour. It is right to gather to ask God's blessing as the physical work really begins."



Guests poised with party poppers, ready to commemorate the beginning of the Renewal of St Martin-in-the-Fields with a bang!



Tim Lynch, Eric Parry, Robert Kennett and Christopher Burton from Eric Parry Architects



The brass quartet from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama



Andrew Wyllie, Chief Executive of Costain, presents St Martin's with a commemorative engraved silver salver



Rt Revd Mark Sisk leads the blessings:

“... Heavenly Father we thank you for the past history of this church, for its contribution to London, this nation and beyond through the imitation of its architecture, broadcasting, and by its being an international church at the heart of a 'world city'...

... We give thanks for the commitment of the St Martin's community, for generous help from neighbours, friends and supporters. We pray for the resources to complete this project.”



Rabbi Alexandra Wright reads her prayer for the project:

“Eternal God, Sovereign of all creation: We stand before You in gratitude and thanksgiving for the blessing of this Church and all those who serve within her gates. Here is a place where beauty and inspiration, music and prayer awaken the soul to sing praise to You, O Eternal One, whose faithfulness extends to the clouds...

... In our ever-changing world, let us pause as we gather here together to begin the work of re-building and reconstruction. May all who enter this Church find within it a reflection of the glory of Your creation.”

Imam Shahid Hussein, Interfaith Advisor of the Islamic Cultural Centre at London Central Mosque, Regents Park was unfortunately unable to attend. This was his intended prayer:

“(Lit is such a Light) in houses, which Allah hath permitted to be raised to honour; for the celebration, in them, of His name: In them is He glorified in the mornings and in the evenings, (again and again)”



Rev Paul Lau leads a prayer in Cantonese



The Rt Worshipful the Lord Mayor of Westminster joins the St Martin's team in turning a shovel of earth



Rabbi Alexandra Wright, The Venerable Michael Kendall, Rt Revd Mark Sisk and Revd Nicholas Holtam



Guests enjoy a celebratory reception in the Gallery under the church



DONOR SPOTLIGHT: THE WOLFSON FOUNDATION

In 2004 The Wolfson Foundation made a generous pledge to the Renewal of St Martin's, continuing a long tradition of supporting the preservation of listed and historic buildings.

The establishment of The Wolfson Foundation in 1955 was to prove a landmark moment in the provision of philanthropic funding for the advancement of science, medicine, education, humanities and the arts. Founded by Sir Isaac Wolfson, his wife and their son Leonard (now Lord Wolfson of Marylebone, and the Foundation's Chairman since 1972), it has helped to improve many lives by giving to hospitals, universities, museums and historical buildings up and down the country over the past fifty years.

At its heart, The Wolfson Foundation is dedicated to assisting promising new developments at a crucial stage on the road to fruition, and the Renewal of St Martin's is no exception. The

Foundation's contribution to the last, and most historically resonant, phase of the project demonstrates its enthusiasm for the restoration of historic buildings and the rich heritage that such projects showcase for the public.

The Wolfson Foundation has directed its gift to the Renewal Project towards the work to be done on the interior of the church including: the realignment of the sanctuary and the pulpit; the restoration of the pews; and the replacement of post-war coloured window glass with Georgian-style clear glass.

Assisted by the Foundation's generosity, every effort will be made to bring the internal fabric of the church closer to Gibbs' 18th century vision. The paintwork will be restored in line with earlier colour schemes, and the original volume of the portico entrance, with its light and height, will be rediscovered by



© Andrew Pultor 2001

The church interior will be restored in the final phase of the project

removing rooms that were added above the north and south vestibules in the Victorian era.

These changes won't be seen for a while yet, but as the first phase of building work advances, The Wolfson Foundation's support for work that will complete the project should inspire us all to look forward with enthusiasm and excitement to the culmination of these important works.

HO MING WAH CENTRE EAGER TO RETURN

Housed at St Martin's since its formation in 1987, the Ho Ming Wah Chinese Community Centre has found a temporary home during the renovation of its St Martin's facility, which is part of the Renewal Project.

For two days a week most of the scheduled activities will continue to take place at St Anne's Church, Soho. However, some of the services and course offerings, including the popular ballroom dancing class, have been temporarily suspended due to lack of

space. Emeritus Professor Ho Kei Ma from Hong Kong University Medical School is a member of the Ho Ming Wah Council and a dedicated volunteer at the centre. She helps run various programmes with a team of over 30 volunteers, a part-time chef, and Edith Lau (the centre's co-ordinator). Professor Ma said that they are grateful for the temporary facilities at St Anne's. She added that the volunteers and clients alike eagerly await the completion of the new St Martin's facility so they may resume running a

full schedule of courses, including welfare and health advice sessions, Tai Chi, English and Mandarin classes, table tennis, and the successful social and lunch clubs. "The new Ho Ming Wah Centre at St Martin's will change the scope of what we can provide for the Chinese community in London," enthuses Professor Ma.

The new facility will provide Chinese people with opportunities to take pride in their community centre as well as showcase the rich Chinese traditions...



Traditional festivities take place on Charing Cross Road to mark Chinese New Year

...supported by St Martin's. The new centre will accommodate more members and offer a wider variety of educational and lifestyle benefits, and Professor Ma revealed that they hope to design a more varied programme of events once the new facility opens.

For the often overlooked Chinese

community, the new centre will mean much more than just enjoying a new space, it means a better way of life in central London. "For many of these people, it is all they have - this is the only place they can go," says Professor Ma. "Many are older and do not speak English well. The Ho Ming Wah provides them with a community and a purpose

to their days." Although the centre has seen a reduction in numbers since the move, Professor Ma is confident members will return when the new facility is finished. Many are excited to be a part of the new programmes - it's just the waiting that proves to be the hardest part!

RAILINGS TO OUTLINE NEW SPACE FOR ST MARTIN'S

One of the most important external heritage features of St Martin's has been removed.

The railings surrounding the church are on their way to Bristol for the duration of the Renewal Project. Only once the church itself has been cleaned and repaired and the building project completed will the railings return-refurbished and more secure - to mark the sacred boundaries of this landmark site.

The railings that we see on the portico were designed by James Gibbs and fitted in 1726 to secure the area. At the time, there was no space to have railings away from the church, as St Martin's Lane was a narrow road, crowded with buildings that came fairly close to the church.

When John Nash built the North Terrace and laid out burial vaults in the 19th century, the sacred space beyond the footprint of the church was effectively expanded and it was thought to be important to mark this in some way. Therefore Nash copied the design of Gibbs' railings, and used them to mark out the churchyard. This boundary existed for nearly two hundred years

until the recent building work started. Eric Parry Architects observed that since the burial vaults were being used as social care facilities, the railings were no longer marking a sacred space. It is possible, therefore, to move the railings much closer to the church and create a wide public area that will allow the creation of an entrance pavilion to the underground facilities and a lightwell.

In reality, it doesn't seem that Nash was very good at building railings, compared to his architectural and town-planning skills! His design meant that they were not as securely set in the stone as they should be, and there has been some corrosion within the bases, which will be repaired as part of their restoration.

Dorothea Restoration has removed all the railings, and taken them to their base in Bristol for careful repair and strengthening work using both traditional and modern metalworking techniques. The railings will then be stored in Bristol until the end of the project.

When returned, they will still frame the site and form a quiet, reflective space to the east of the church. Raised above the

traffic, the railings will enclose a calm courtyard where people can escape some of the bustle of London and enjoy the artistry of a re-designed new East Window of St Martin's, gleaming above.

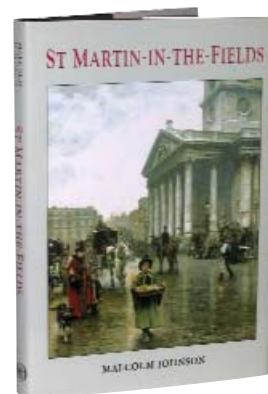


Removal of the iron railings from around the site ready to be sent to Bristol for restoration



DID YOU KNOW?

Three Presbyterian ministers from Connecticut, Timothy Cutler, Samuel Johnson and Daniel Browne, arrived in London seeking ordination in the Church of England in 1723. Their baptisms were validated at St Sepulchre, Holborn on 20 March and two days later they were confirmed and deaconed in the new St Martin's, presumably by the Bishop of London who had responsibility for the Possessions, as America was still called. They were priested at 6 a.m. on 31 March by the Bishop of London and returned home, where Dr. Cutler became the first Rector of the Old North Church, Boston and Dr. Johnson the first President of what is now Columbia University.



An excerpt from Malcolm Johnson's book, 'St-Martin-in-the-Fields'

Pick up a copy from the Shop in the Crypt (£20) - it's filled with pleasurable anecdotes and interesting historical information about St Martin's. All proceeds go to the building project.

A WORD FROM OUR DIRECTORS

The last month has been a very good one in the campaign office: we have received five pledges worth £800,000 in total!

Successful fundraising isn't about doing deals, it's about building relationships in which everyone will feel fulfilled. The recipient is obviously grateful but donors must also feel that their gift will make a difference, and will bring pleasure and satisfaction in years to come. This remains our goal, whatever the donation: a hundred, a hundred thousand or that elusive million.

The importance of good relationship building can be seen in how each of the last month's commitments came about. In one instance, the approach to a foundation required form-filling and box-ticking, but it was the on-going communication between foundation staff - who visited on several occasions and got to know both St Martin's and The Connection - and the home team that made the difference. The outcome is that this foundation is also considering a revenue grant to The Connection, alongside a very substantial capital gift to the Renewal

Project. None of that would have been achieved by box-ticking alone.

The other recent contributions and their affinity with the campaign are as varied as the people who offered them. One donor was so moved by the Blessing and Ground-breaking Ceremony, that he promptly increased ten-fold the pledge he and his wife had previously made, and expressed the hope that it would encourage - or challenge! - others to do the same. With another benefactor the campaign team enjoyed debating how to allocate his gift in a way that would please him best. We suggested the repair and re-gilding of the weather vane, and received very prompt agreement: "we'll like being up in the sky".

Two equally magnificent pledges came from donors who had contributed to the initial, exploratory, stages of the project. One visited St Martin's recently, to see progress and engaged deeply with our work and with the Vicar, Nicholas Holtam, and days later made a renewed and increased commitment.

A pledge is not, however, the end of the story - rather the beginning of a

mutually beneficial relationship that will continue to manifest itself in many ways long after the project is complete.

Writing this, I am conscious that I've been focussing on quite substantial gifts and, indeed, we do need more donations at that level. But I also want those supporters who responded to the last newsletter to know how grateful we are to hear from you. Your financial support and your encouragement about the new design were such that the team insisted on taking turns opening the envelopes and reading the letters aloud! This is an example of how important our relationship with ALL our supporters is, at every level. I hope these examples will encourage many more to engage with us to continue to make this campaign a true success.

Patricia Castanha

The role of Campaign Director is shared by Patricia Castanha and Barbara Davidson. If you wish to contact either of them, please do so via Helen Grearson on 020 77661166.

the Renewal of St Martin's

SUPPORTER FORM



IF YOU HAVE ALREADY MADE YOUR OWN GENEROUS CONTRIBUTION TO THE BUILDING PROJECT, WE THANK YOU.
PLEASE DO FEEL FREE TO PASS THIS ON AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO JOIN YOU.

PERSONAL DETAILS: Title(s) and full Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

COMMENTS: _____

Data Protection: We will store your details in our database. We will not share your information with other organisations. Occasionally we may contact you with details of the work of St Martin-in-the-Fields. These messages may include requests for donations. We fully understand that you may not be able to respond. If you would prefer not to hear from us in this way, please contact us.

MAKING A GIFT: I would like to make a gift of _____ to the Renewal of St Martin-in-the-Fields.

Frequency: Once / Monthly / Quarterly / Annually

Payment Type: Cash / Cheque / CAF Vouchers / Banker's Order / Credit Card

(Please make cheques and CAF vouchers payable to St Martin-in-the-Fields)

Credit Card Donations: *(Please sign below)*

Card Type: Visa / Mastercard / Maestro (Switch) / Eurocard / Delta / Solo / American Express

Card Number: | | |

Expiry Date: M M | Y Y Y Y

MAESTRO (SWITCH) ONLY: Start Date: M M | Y Y Y Y

Issue Number:

Banker's Orders: Please pay the account of: St Martin-in-the-Fields, Natwest Bank, PO Box 414, 38 Strand, London WC2N 5JQ (A/c No: 32033214, Sort Code: 60-40-05)

Your Bank's Name & Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Your Account Number:

Your Sort Code: | |

Please debit the above amount from my account starting on: D D | M M | Y Y Y Y

(You may change or cancel this standing order at any time)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Gift Aid Declaration: All gifts to St Martin's are eligible for the Gift Aid Scheme which allows St Martin's to claim back the tax you have paid on the money you donate. This means that by signing the Gift Aid Declaration below you will increase the value of your gift by almost a third (approximately 28%) at no cost to you. You can cancel this declaration at any time by notifying us. You must pay an amount of Income or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax that we reclaim on your donations in the tax year. Please notify us if you change your name or address or if you no longer pay enough tax to qualify. *Please note: your declaration is not valid unless you include your home address and the date.*

I am a UK taxpayer and want St Martin-in-the-Fields to treat all donations I make, until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

* delete as appropriate

PLEASE CUT HERE

PLEASE CUT HERE



The Renewal of St Martin-in-the-Fields

St Martin-in-the-Fields is a living community in a changing world. The building project will develop the physical accommodation needed for the long-term continuation of the worship and work of this church, including hospitality to visitors and the care of homeless people.

For further information please contact us:

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St Martin-in-the-Fields Development Trust
Registered Charity No. 1110406

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Chairman: Ian Henderson CBE

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