

egg shell. We paid for car driving lessons at the age of 17 and made a standing offer of the use of a car even to take to Leeds. He would probably have refused the offer of a Rolls-Royce. Bikers are like that. I am simply thankful that there are no grounds for ill feeling about his death. No one else was hurt. He never drank when riding. His machine was found to have been in perfect condition. He had not stormed off after a family row. We were in mutual harmony as son and parents and all our memories are happy. To the last we never lost him and he died instantaneously doing what he most enjoyed.

How was Christmas? My brother came over from Australia and we had a good family gathering. We knew Nic would have us enjoy the day so at lunch we drank to his memory and celebrated as usual. Then the visitors went home, the youngsters went out, and we his parents wept in the lonely darkness. In January came his 21st birthday. We put flowers on his grave. It seemed such a futile gift as he had little interest in them when he was alive. Our wedding anniversary this year will be a hurdle. Nic would want us to celebrate the occasion that eventually gave rise to his conception, but no doubt the day will be spent quietly. Grief has drawn us even closer and perhaps anniversaries from now on will mean more to us as times of thought and reflection instead of routine celebration.

### Where the answer begins

I happen to be one of the many whose reaction to death is influenced by Christianity and non-religious colleagues may be interested in how this works. Why was the prayer of hundreds

of believers for Nic's life refused? For me the answer begins where C S Lewis points out<sup>3</sup> that the best of petitioners also had his most desperate prayer refused<sup>1</sup> and was least comforted in his greatest need.<sup>5</sup> I assume that we shall be united with Nic in eternity and that as our "then" is his "now" he has us with him already. The division of mankind into those destined for eternal felicity and those condemned to perpetual punishment or, at best, annihilation, seems so dependent on conflicting sectarian dogma that I am content to leave the running of eternity to that ultimate reality for which I believe Christ to be the evidence. I do not find the answers to the questions "why?" and "why Nic?" in religion but in life. The first answer is in the counterquestion "why not Nic?" Secondly, I discover that freedom of all kinds entails risks and that means that the worst consequence, death, is going to happen to someone some time and by random chance, not with any form of fairness. Freedom of speech, political freedom, freedom to climb mountains, to drive cars, and ride motorcycles costs lives. One of the safest places to be is in prison. We gave Nic freedom and he paid the price and our loss is our share in that cost.

### References

- <sup>1</sup> Binyon L. *For the Fallen*. Collected Poems of Laurence Binyon. London: Macmillan, 1931:209.
- <sup>2</sup> Samuel xviii, 33.
- <sup>3</sup> Lewis CS. *Fern-seed and elephants and other essays on Christianity*. London: Collins, 1975:103.
- <sup>4</sup> Mark XIV, 32.
- <sup>5</sup> Mark XV, 34.

## New developments at the Society of Apothecaries

RONALD GIBSON

Founded by Charter of King James I on 6 December 1617, the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries is the city livery company of the medical profession and a medical licensing body; it grants a fully registrable medical qualification, and various postgraduate diplomas. The society has owned the site of its hall since 1632. Before this the hall was part of the property of the Dominican (Black Friars) Friary from 1278 until its dissolution by Henry VIII in 1539. The hall and the remaining property of the friary were destroyed by the Great Fire in 1666 and rebuilt to a design by Thomas Locke, largely as it is now, between 1668 and 1670. It is the oldest complete City livery hall and a unique example of seventeenth century architecture.

For the past 10 years the society has been considering the redevelopment of its property surrounding the hall (which had been purchased in stages over the years). Nevertheless, conditions were not right until 1980, when the Society's honorary architect, Mr T E D Cusdin, prepared a memorandum on a comprehensive development of the society's properties. Encouraged by his opinion, the society engaged Mr Sam Lloyd as its architect and in February 1981, acting with the society's surveyors, he made proposals for the restoration, rehabilitation, and partial redevelopment of the society's property in Black

Friars Lane and Playhouse Yard (Shakespeare's Black Friars Theatre stood just south east of the great hall, and part of the site of the theatre now forms a corner of the society's property).

### Redevelopment

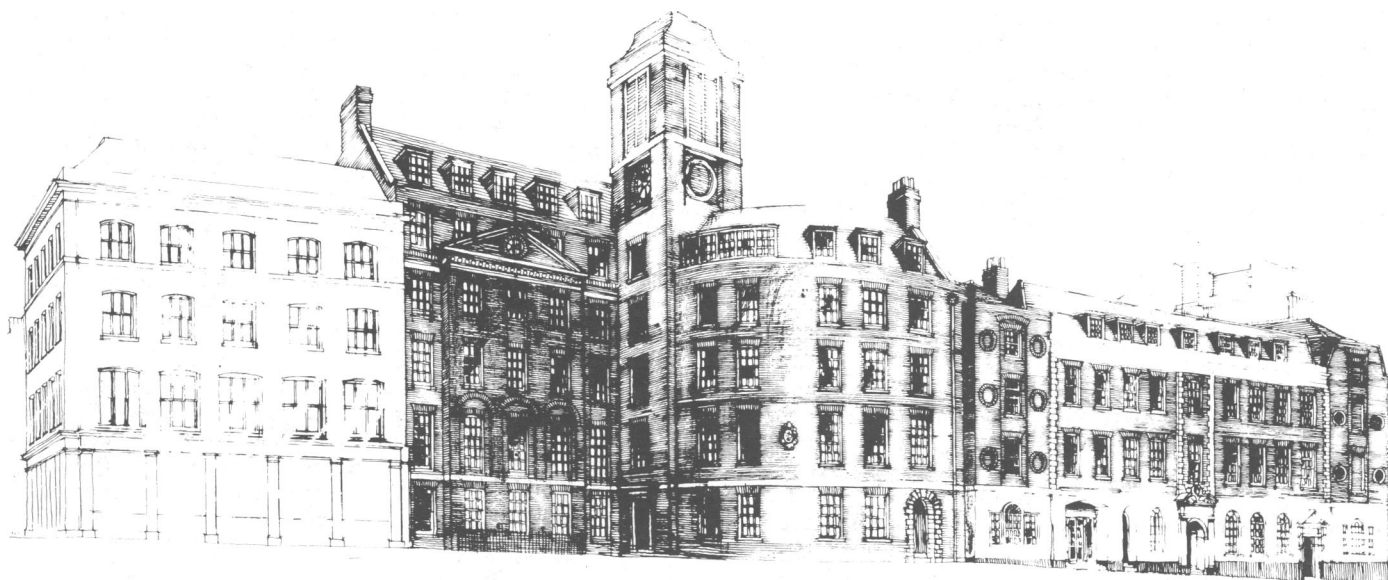
Redevelopment was proposed in four major phases, beginning with the restoration and reinstatement of the library on the first floor. This library has a particular historic interest as it is on the site of the spring of a bridge erected in 1522 by Henry VIII when he entertained Charles V, King of Spain and Emperor of Germany. It was then called a gallery, and allegedly Catherine of Aragon, Wolsey, and Campeggio all walked through it on their way to the Parliament Chamber of the Friary, where the validity of the marriage of Henry VIII with Catherine was argued. (Scene IV of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* is set in "a hall in Black Friars.")

Regrettably this lovely room had been converted into a wine dispense and the court intended to proceed with its restoration at once. This work has now been completed and the refurbished library was opened by HRH the Duke of Kent at the society's soirée on 21 July 1982. This phase also entailed rebuilding the stairway into the courtyard from the south end of the hall and refixing an existing eighteenth century panelled door into the arch at the top of the stairs.

In succeeding phases a new building is to be erected on the site to the north of the hall, the new frontage being built in a

### Winchester, Hants

Sir RONALD GIBSON, FRCS, FRGGP, retired general practitioner and Master, the Society of Apothecaries 1981-2



Architect's drawing of the completed development, as seen from the west. Architect: Mr S Lloyd (Green, Lloyd, and Adams), chartered surveyor: Mr R Timmis (Farebrother); structural engineers: Considered and Partners; mechanical service engineers: Alan G Usher and Partners; building contractors: Mansells, Harry Neal Ltd, and St Anselms Development Co Ltd. Reproduced by permission of the architect and surveyor.

manner sympathetic to the existing adjacent eighteenth century building. This site was occupied by Cobham House (built in 1916), the Brande block, and other minor outbuildings. These are being replaced by office accommodation of a high standard, the upper floors enjoying a fine view of St Paul's Cathedral. Within the scheme is accommodation for the clerk and a housekeeper's flat situated in what was once the apprentices' dormitory and an examinations laboratory in the old kitchens. The master's flat is also to be restored.

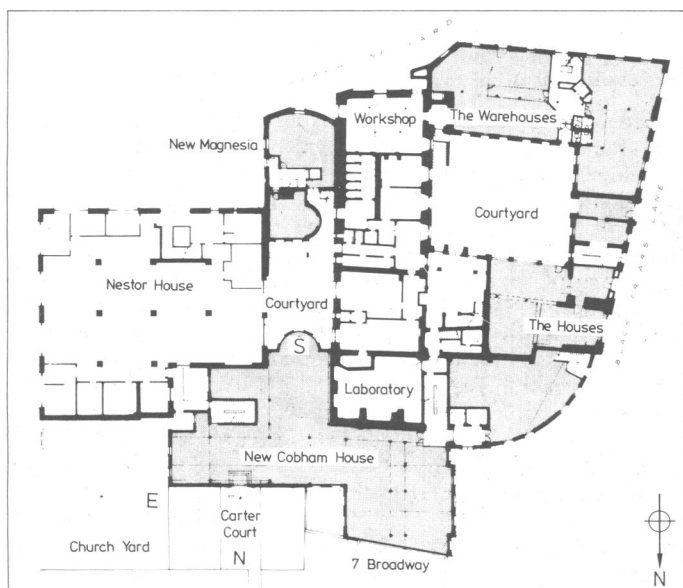
The houses, between the courtyard and Cobham House, dating from 1668 (being extensively altered in 1786), have been gutted and will be replaced by offices, the first floor being converted to provide new kitchens for the hall. The dilapidated Magnesia building to the south east of the hall has been redesigned to provide new office space on five floors, the interior of the counting house and the existing exterior being retained and restored. Some concern was felt over the structural stability

of the east wall of the hall; the Magnesia building was therefore redesigned so that it will be an independent building with no bearing on the hall.

The warehouse range will be refurbished later, within the existing eighteenth century external fabric, to provide open plan office space on four floors. It is hoped that a small museum will be assembled in the basement of this building.

All the designs are for brick Georgian style buildings which will conform with the society's present property.

Apart from the advantages of owning modernised buildings in good condition and designed specifically for the needs of the late twentieth century, the court is particularly attracted by this scheme in that the resulting increased revenue will enable the society more adequately to fulfil its ambitions in medical research, scholarship, and education, while enhancing the funds available for its charitable purposes. The additional activities caused by all these plans and their activation have been time consuming and stressful to a city livery company geared over the centuries, in comparative seclusion, to its traditional role and unused to "extramural" disturbances. Few of these activities may be said to be part of the society's normal daily round and common task: obtaining planning permission and listed building consent; cooperating with conservationists, archaeologists, and the Museum of London; terminating some tenancies and avoiding overdisturbing others; coping with tax problems, the rights of light and electricity board substations; negotiating with the Charity Commissioners, the Consistory Court, and the London Diocesan Board; and dealing with many other interested bodies.



Ground floor plan of the hall of the Society of Apothecaries and its surrounding buildings. The parts to be redeveloped are shaded. Reproduced by permission of the architect and surveyor.

### The least disturbance

The court's greatest concern has been to fit the succeeding stages of the rebuilding into the various examination dates so that examiners and candidates suffer the least possible disturbance. The problem of security has also had to be constantly in our minds. The terms of appointment of Major M G Canning, recruited to help the clerk in September 1982, include acting as client liaison officer and project controller, specifically concerned with "security, access, and nuisance." We owe a considerable debt to the building contractors for the thought they have given to ensure that the society's work can continue without undue interruption—and this includes the dinners and other



social functions which form part of the society's annual programme.

Even so, though some degree of disturbance is inevitable, a tour of the works (with the superb view of St Paul's when one reaches the roof via a ladder) fills a mere doctor with wonder that such a complicated project can be managed with such efficiency and precision and that the initial destruction is gradually being replaced by modern buildings, which seem to be climbing up the ancient walls and, no doubt, will soon give the appearance of having been there for centuries.

### Archaeological discoveries

The archaeologists have also been at work. The major focus of their attention has been the masonry of the late thirteenth century Dominican (or Black Friars) monastery. They have identified the south and west walls of the church, several foundation piers for the internal wall of the south aisle, the wall of the guest house, and a cloister wall. Detailed drawings and photography of the medieval walls have revealed the use of a constructional technique known as galeting, in which slivers of flint

are inserted between the blocks of ragstone to produce a pleasing decorative effect. This technique was in fashion in the fourteenth century and has not been observed before in London. Other features include a sixteenth century well and a number of seventeenth and eighteenth century cess and rubbish pits which have yielded some interesting pottery.

The progress of the redevelopment has been under the monthly supervision of a committee chaired by Professor Alastair Dudgeon; the society and all its advisers are represented at its meetings and we seem to have been fortunate in that our experts tell us the building has proceeded so far with the minimum of complications and unforeseen difficulties. The programme is virtually on schedule and by the spring of 1985 a Society of Apothecaries will emerge with the façade, ancient hall, and courtyard untouched but with most of the surrounding buildings refurbished to satisfy all its needs for at least the next century. Then it will turn its attention to the southern half of the courtyard and refurbishing the warehouse.

I acknowledge the invaluable help given me by the clerk to the society, Major Charles O'Leary, in checking my facts.

The illustration on the cover is of the Society of Apothecaries.

## Memorials

CLAIRE F HILTON

Leave the familiar square at Barts with its fountain playing, its tall plane trees interspersed with tubs of flowers, its people and cars, and a two minute walk east leads to the green and shady Postman's Park (fig 1). Through the large iron gates is another fountain, flowers, neatly mown lawns, statues, and two fig trees which bear fruit in August and September. The park is a pleasant place to linger on a hot day, but if it is raining there is ample shelter under a long wooden cloister. Come rain or shine, walk towards the cloister, and the blue and white ceramic tiles on the wall ahead will certainly catch your eye. On these tiles are many inscriptions, and when you begin to read you will realise that here is one of the most unusual and touching memorials in London. It commemorates the deeds of heroism performed by 50 or so brave men, women, and children at the turn of this century, people who lost their lives while trying to save others.

Three of the plaques bear testimony to the bravery of medical men. The first, chronologically, tells of:

"Samuel Rabbeth  
Medical Officer  
of the Royal Free Hospital  
who tried to save a child  
suffering from diphtheria  
at the cost of his own life  
October 26 1884."

Rabbeth was performing a tracheotomy on a 4 year old child. Air did not enter the lungs because of secretions blocking the airway so Rabbeth sucked on the tube to clear them. The



FIG 1—Postman's Park.

patient obtained only temporary relief. Four days later Rabbeth developed signs of diphtheria, and as the plaque states the young doctor died. The date of death, however, was 20 October, not 26 October as Rabbeth's obituary appeared in the *BMJ* on 25 October.<sup>1</sup>

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