

1969/2 Three Stone Friezes

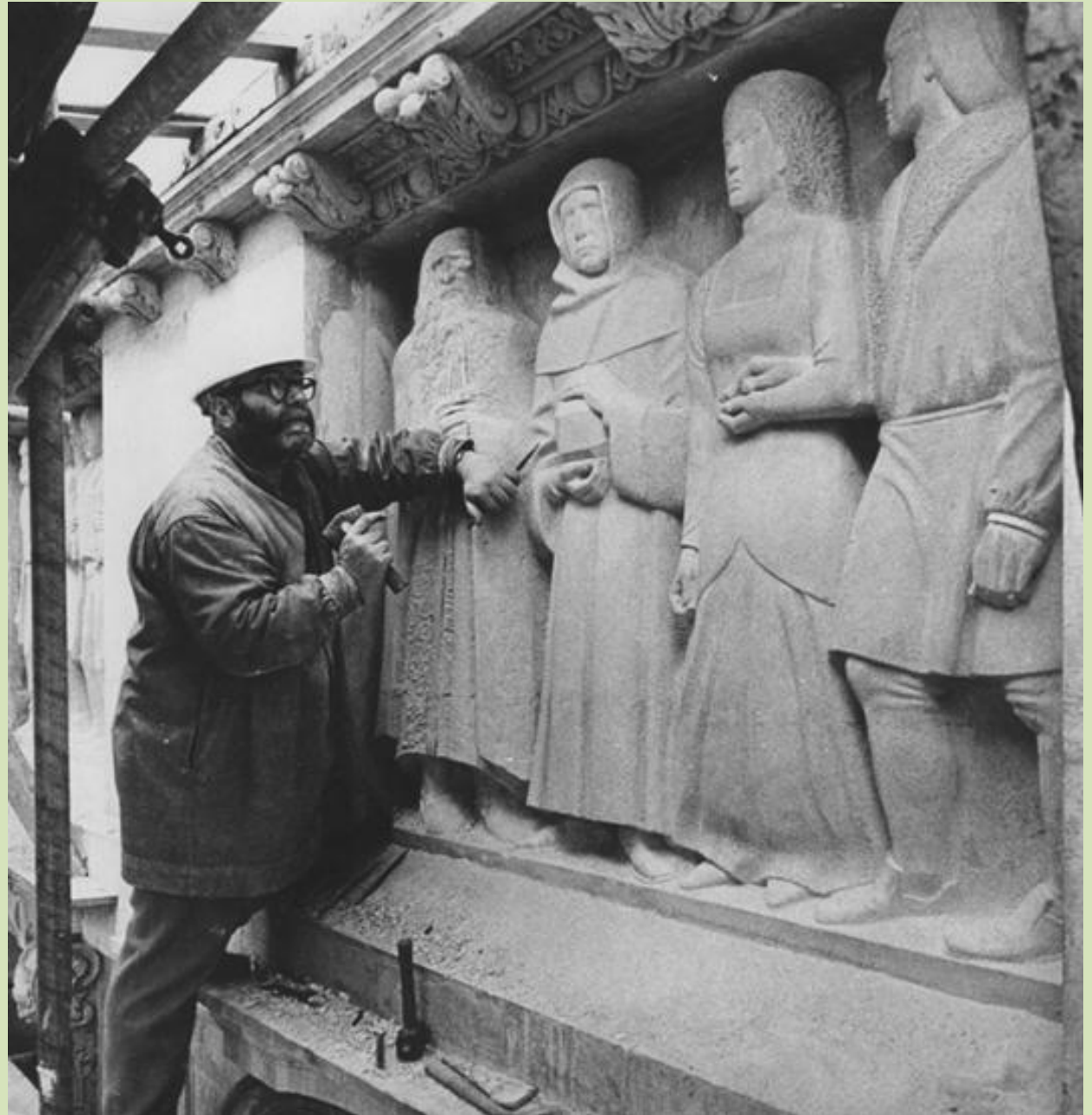
Carved in situ on the Great Swan Alley facade of William Whitfield's extension to The Institute of Chartered Accountants, Chartered Accountants' Hall, Moorgate Place, London EC2.

The extension was commissioned in 1959 and opened by HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother in May 1970.

The figures were carved from imagination and McFall worked on these three friezes from April 1968 finishing in 1969. He first made clay and plaster models of each.

References:

1) "Chartered Accountants Hall - the first 100 years" by PG Boys page 42. "Belcher & Joass Old into new" by A Service in Architectural Review Nov 1970 "When the Great Swan Alley facade was completed by Whitfield in the 1960's, the sculptured frieze was continued by David McFall with 3 panels at the eastern end, which balance to some extent those at the western end (by Thornycroft and Stevenson). As one moves towards Copthall Avenue the first panel has 5 Egyptian figures; the central one is an accountant holding a tablet inscribed with hieroglyphics. The second panel contains seven 19th century men, representing the founding fathers of the Institute, one of whom is holding the Royal Charter. The third panel consists of 4 individuals, one of whom is Luca Pacioli, the Italian Renaissance monk who was the first to



publish a work on double-entry book-keeping." [from McFall's diaries Leonardo da Vinci is the figure on the left hand side of this panel].

2) The Institute of Chartered Accountants: 'Chartered Accountants' Hall in the City of London, the headquarters building of the Institute was begun in 1890. The original Hall, fronting on Moorgate Place, was designed by the architect John Belcher RA, whose plans had been successful in open competition. It was opened in 1893 by the President of the day, Edwin Waterhouse. Described by Sir Nikolaus Pevsner as "eminently original and delightfully picturesque", it is a fine example of Victorian neo-Baroque which draws its inspiration from the work of the Italian Renaissance. As the Institute's membership grew, so did the building. The first extension was built by Belcher's partner, J J Joass, in 1930-31 as a continuation of the original design. This more recent facade, extending down one side of the 19th Century original on Great Swan Alley, begins after the unused entrance which gives onto the alley. A more radical expansion took place when in 1959 William Whitfield was commissioned to extend the building and provide a Great Hall for large gatherings. His design juxtaposes the clear, simple lines of contemporary architecture with the more ornate work of his predecessors. By suspending the five new stories of office

space

above the Great Hall from beams supported on four columns on the outside of his building he was able to create a Great Hall free from pillars on the inside. On Cophall Avenue he created a second imposing facade in concrete and glass and the resulting blend of old and new produces a distinctive multi-faceted building providing the visitor with contrasting impressions according to the direction from which the Hall is approached. The new headquarters was opened by Her Majesty The Queen Mother in May 1970.

External Frieze The sculptured frieze and the figure of Justice surmounting the oriel at the angle of the original building are by Hamo Thornycroft RA; the other 19th Century sculptures are by Harry Bates ARA. H A Stevenson sculptured the frieze which continues on the 1930's extension. The friezes are allegories in human form. Thornycroft's contribution is first a series of panels depicting a range of concepts from the Arts and Sciences to the Colonies, and secondly a frieze depicting the professions and crafts connected with building. Stevenson's work depicts the history of architecture starting with a caveman on the extreme right and including Wren with a model of St Paul's. The truncated figures at the





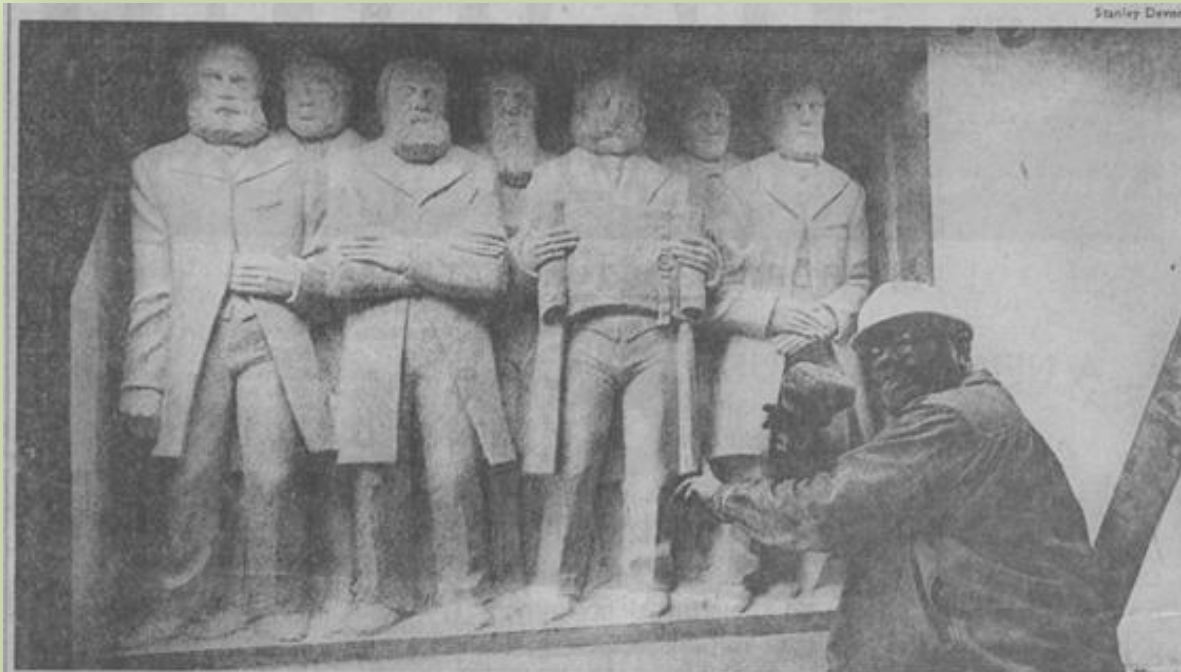
feet of the Statue of Justice are "the upper parts of figures representing accountants, one in the act of examining a candidate and the other auditing accounts".

3) Public Monument and Sculpture Association National Recording Project: Façade of Chartered Accountants' Hall (decoration), Moorgate Pl. / Gt. Swan Alley / Copthall Av. Work ID644; Manual ReferenceCLCOL556. Architect Belcher, John; Architect Whitfield, William; Architect Joass, J.J.; Sculptor McFall, David; Sculptor Stevenson, James Alexander; Sculptor Thornycroft, W.H.; Sculptor Bates, H.; Date of design1930

Imposing building with a mass of sculptural detail. Starting from top - Moorgate Place end: Building has one extra floor on this side with elaborate lion-head cornice. Large frieze between first and second floors has bold relief of trades (starting from north end of Moorgate Place): - Four figures representing ARTS with attributes and Pegasus at centre; - Four figures representing SCIENCES with attributes, laurel tree background and inscribed central shield (VERI / TAS); - Four figures representing CRAFTS with attributes, laurel tree background and inscribed central shield (LABORARE / EST / ORARE); - EDUCATION - female personification flanked by mother / child with schoolmaster (with inscribed book) and tutor / scholar; - COMMERCE - female personification (with attributes) flanked by two male and two female figures; - MANUFACTURERS - female personification with beehives and two male and two female figure; - AGRICULTURE - female personification (with attributes) flanked by two male and two female figures; - MINING - female personification (with attributes) flanked by four male figures. Frieze at corner façade (presumably accountancy) is obscured by large free-standing figure of accountancy atop oriel. She holds a (broken) sword and scale and is blindfolded. Great Swan Alley façade: - RAILWAYS - winged female personification with two male and two female figures (one with sack inscribed GPO); - SHIPPING - female personification with three male and one female figures; - INDIA COLONIES - female personification with four male figures (one with turban). The lower part of the façade includes now an immense frieze of - BUILDING - female personification with (on her right - west side) fourteen figures of craftsmen and (on her left - east side) two more craftsmen followed by thirty-two representatives of architecture from the stone age to the present, holding plans, models, books, statues, etc. The series include also personages such as Wren. Further east, on the building extension three smaller frieze scenes represent Egyptian, modern and mediaeval architecture, including five, seven and four figures respectively. Windows at level below the Building friezes have mostly grotesque headstops at brackets. Empty niche below personified BUILDING is flanked by winged female terms with floral drapes. Bracket keystone head of JUSTICE below. Delineating bays along entire frontage between first and second floors are a series of male and female terms including queens, Mercury, muses, demons etc. with attributes. At Moorgate entrance a large crowned cartouche in segmental pediment bearing bold relief of accountants' arms surrounded by wreath and supported by two full length male figures in loincloth. Below inscription in bronze: INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS



Another accountants' arms cartouche below corner oriel between massive scrolled male terms in supporting poses; merman's fins below. Gt. Swan Alley entrance has small version of arms on cartouche within broken scrolled pediment above door: this is repeated at east doorway (now Blackwell's bookshop) which is within segmental-headed portico with further large arms cartouche in pediment - this with floral swags and inscription in relief: RECTE NUMERARE.



Stanley Devan

DAVID MCFALL, R.A. calls this sculptural Victorian parody a plastic pun. Whether the frieze (one of three) will be fully appreciated by his clients, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales, is less certain—though the members can at least assure McFall that he gets tax relief in this year's budget as he has been working on the friezes for over a year.

The frieze is on an extension, now under construction, of the ICA's old building off Moor-gate. The original building, described as high Victorian with strong North Italian renaissance

The stone-faced accountants

features, had a frieze of the history of man, ending with the neolithic era. Casting around for a suitable continuation, William Whitfield, the architect, and McFall (who normally specialises in bronze heads and likes "human content" in his work) decided to immortalise, in stone, some of the Irish labourers working on the site. The accountants were not amused: nor did they take to McFall's next suggestion: he likes emotional subjects and proposed

Christ expelling the money-changers from the temple.

The accountants were adamant. They wanted and got subjects closely connected with the history of accountancy. First come the Egyptians, for paleo-accountancy, as it were. Four scribes stand round a priest who is holding a tablet on which is carved a statement of the number of animals brought for ritual slaughter in his temple—a suitable reminder to the accountants that it's always

best to check stocks personally.

The second frieze celebrates the invention of the system of double-entry book-keeping at the time of the Italian Renaissance; and the third, a group of seven wittily parodied Victorian worthies, stands for the seven men who founded the Institute.

They are not, however, portraits of the founders: the ICA's professional rules of anonymity cannot be relaxed even a century after death. So no free publicity can be given, four storeys above Great Swan Alley, to the shades of the original Cooper Brothers, or whoever the immortals were.