

CREATING THE CUSHIONS AND KNEELERS OF THE CATHEDRAL

The story of using rug-hooking to create the cushions and kneelers was told by the co-ordinator of the project, Alice Robertson, and much of our presentation is drawn from her account.

Cushions and Kneelers

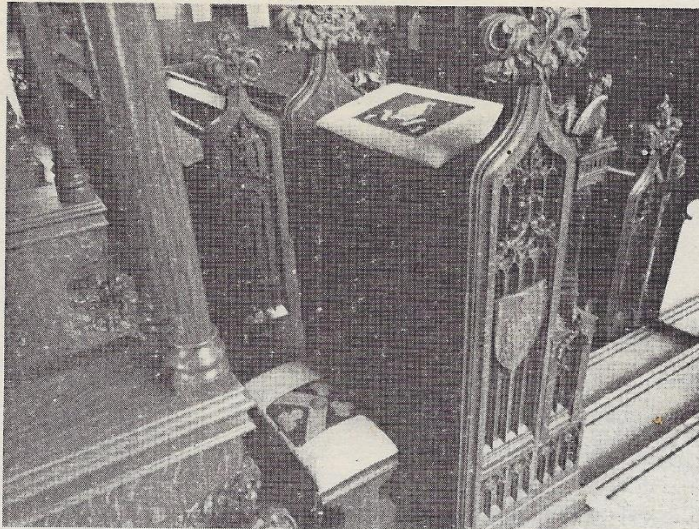
in the Chancel of

Christ's Church Cathedral

Hamilton

by

ALICE ROBERTSON

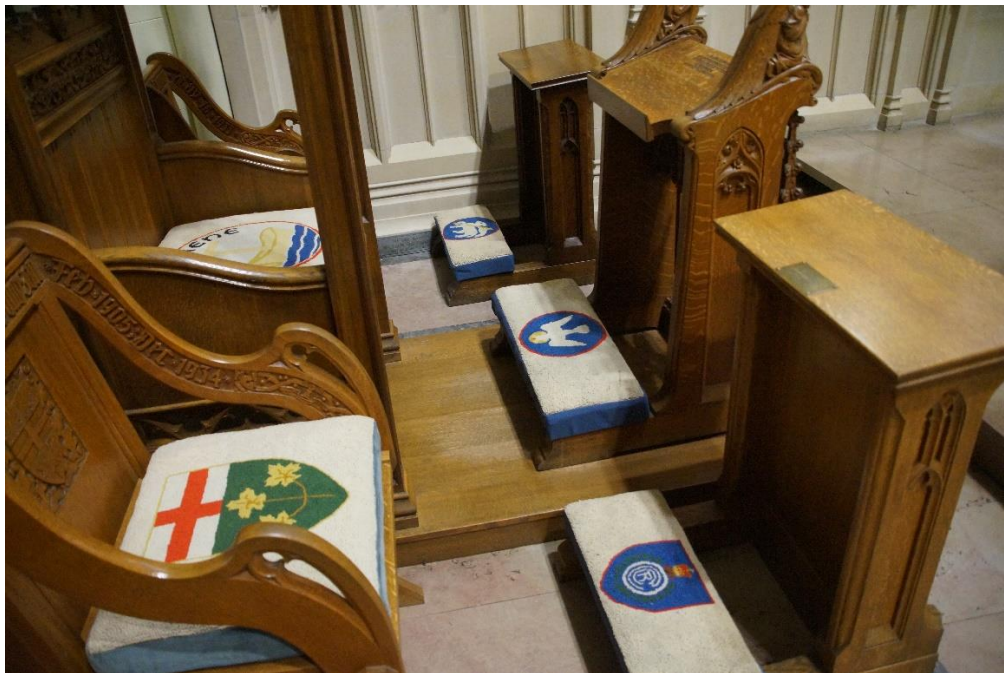


BIRTH OF A PROJECT

In 1964 communicants came to the altar rail and knelt on the bare marble step to receive bread and wine. Most of those seated in the stalls of the chancel sat on the hard wooden seats, although there were cushions for the bishop and visiting dignitaries in the three seats north of the altar.

A member of the Altar Guild of the cathedral heard that hooked work had been used in a local church and had been simple to learn.

Work started on creating cushions and kneelers in the 1960s, but most were made in the 1970s. The first work appears to have been on the kneelers that form part of a number of prayer desks used by servers and visiting dignitaries, as in the photo below:



TRAINING AND DESIGN

Rittermere Studios in Vineland provided the necessary information and three members of the Altar Guild made the first cushions for the stalls of cathedral clergy and servers with the crest of the cathedral on them.

Heraldry was chosen for the cushion patterns, because basic colors without shading are used, and the designs are bold and two-dimensional. Two Hamilton architects, Hugh Robertson and Peter Bell, redrew all images from the assorted sources used. The designs were traced onto the burlap using carbon paper. Times have changed – now one can scan the image and print the design onto the burlap or other material.

Twenty women of the cathedral were trained by Rittermere Studios, and they met weekly in the late 1970s to create the cushions and kneelers.

If one turns the cushions over, one can find the name of the maker and the design that was used on each item. Some of the hookers made multiple cushions and also worked on the long kneelers. Alice Robertson, who led the project, probably made most, but the name of Jane O’Flynn, Rose Apigian and Midge Ross feature on multiple cushions and kneelers.

The designs may be grouped and are described in this photographic display. Examples of cushions and one communion rail kneeler appear on the tables in this display. We encourage you to examine the others, which are in place in the chancel.