

Carved stone is donated to Lewes Priory Trust

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A fine carved stone, originally commissioned for the Lewes garden of local historians Colin and Judy Brent in 1997 has been donated by them to Lewes Priory Trust.

A ceremony to mark the generous gift was held in the Priory Park herb garden on Saturday.

Mr Brent spoke on the history of the stone and the sculpture and a vote of thanks was given by Sy Morse-Brown, chairman of Lewes Priory Trust.

The stone is Hopton-Wood, a fine marble-like limestone from near Wirksworth in the Derbyshire Peak District.

The quotation in a crisp Roman font reads: *ambulantis in horto audiuerunt vocem Dei* which translates from the Latin as: 'They heard the voice of God walking in the garden'. The quote is from Genesis, the first book of the Bible.



The stone in situ: From left, Judith Brent, Sy Morse-Brown, Colin Brent, Dr Anthony Freeman, Arthur Franklin and Professor Paul Benjamin

The work was executed by Guy Bettley-Cooke, who once worked with Judy Brent at the East Sussex Record Office and who subsequently trained as a stone cutter under David Kindersley (the best-known former apprentice of the Ditchling-based sculptor and

typographer Eric Gill).

Mr Bettley-Cooke admired the work of Eric Gill and the sculptor's nephew, John Skelton, who spent 50 years working in Sussex. Mr Bettley-Cooke later worked independently and one of his significant commissions was

a memorial stone for the Earl of Cawdor. Mr Morse-Brown said: "On the occasion of the opening of the herb garden in the 1990s it was blessed by the Rev Peter Markby so it is entirely appropriate to the original monastic setting of Priory Park."