

Friends of Hornsey Church Tower

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The next big event at the Tower will be the **CAROL SERVICE on Saturday 18 December at 6 p.m.** We will be gathering in front of the open doors of the tower for a series of readings and carols led by Father Stephen Taylor. Bring a torch! Afterwards there will be a chance to see inside the tower, and, as at last year's very enjoyable occasion, the Friends will be providing seasonal refreshments (contributions welcome). Don't miss this chance to celebrate Christmas at this atmospheric ancient site .

The **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS** on Hornsey High Street are one of the results of the current campaign to brighten up the High Street. The Friends were pleased to make a financial contribution along with local traders. The lights are now in place and give a bright, festive feel to the 'forgotten' High Street and are a sign of confidence in its regeneration. To complement this the Friends will be doing their usual bit to provide lights on the top of the tower.

GOOD NEWS about the tower repairs. At last all the red tape has been sorted out: we have the necessary Faculty from the diocese and the Heritage Lottery Fund is satisfied that funding is in place and that work can start. At time of writing we await a starting date from the contractors. Many thanks to our architect, Tony Richardson, who has put much effort into finalising all the necessary details.

Since the summer newsletter much has happened. As building work was delayed we were after all able to take visitors up the tower on Open House Day in September. This was a great success, and many visitors also followed the churchyard Tomb Trail, with the aid of the specially prepared notes. Previous gardening efforts ensured that all the tombs

on the list were easily visible. Further exploration has revealed that there are many more interesting tombs: we hope to prepare a second trail for next year.

October 3 saw the start of the Sunday services in the tower, which are now taking place on a regular basis, under the leadership of Father Stephen Taylor, curate at St George's Cranley Gardens. The 'vestry room' has been redecorated, floors and panelling repaired, and simple furniture provided.

Churchyard watchers will have seen the large new noticeboard by the High Street giving details of services. You may also have missed the war memorial plaque by the main gate. Pending repair of the damaged gatepiers it has been removed for safe keeping. You will also be aware of the housing development that has been taking place on the site to the west of the churchyard. We are hopeful that following negotiations, the developers will retain the brick churchyard wall, with appropriate strengthening.

Energetic gardening activities on 30 October and November 6 included the tidying up of the Memorial Garden, in preparation for the annual Remembrance Day service on 14 November, an impressive and well attended occasion, when the British Legion, local councillors and others laid wreaths in the tower. We are grateful to all those who have been helping on Gardening Days - not least to Robert from the council, into whose lorry we cram all the results of our pruning activities. Robert also brought us a lorry load of wood chippings which we have used to mulch the High Street hedge and memorial garden shrubs (which we hope will help to keep the weeds down). More news of future Gardening days in the New Year. We have made a start on clearing nettles from the west border, in particular to liberate the

tomb of the 19th century Dutch poet Gerrit van Linde, who ran a school at Cromwell House Highgate. We were contacted by Professor Marita Mathijsen from Holland some time ago, as she had been unable to find the tomb!. As a result, Professor Mathijsen was invited to give a lecture to the Hornsey Historical Society on **WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 9**. She will be speaking on 'The Literary Work of Gerrit van Linde, Hornsey's Dutch poet'. Van Linde is well known in Holland for his witty and humorous verse. The talk will take place at the **Union Church Community Centre Ferme Park Road and Weston Road, N8, 7.45 p.m.** We hope to see you there.

Could this be the first of a series of annual talks about notable people buried in Hornsey? Suggestion for future subjects and speakers would be welcome.

There are exciting prospects for the **TOWER CLOCK**. As many of you will know, previous efforts to get the clock working have been frustrated by lack of funds. But now the proposals for improvements to Hornsey High Street, funded by development of the waterworks site, include the repair of the clock mechanism and the refurbishment of the two clock faces. A working clock will do much to bring the tower alive. Details are now under discussion. Study of the clock in the broader context of the measurement of time would make an excellent educational project; if you would be interested in pursuing this further please get in touch.

We were pleased to meet Catherine Perry, who has recently been appointed as a conservation liaison person to work in the west of the borough. Catherine is planning a series of **CONSERVATION WALKS** in **March-April 2005**, one of which will be based on the churchyard. Look out for more news.

Our 2005 TOWERS AND TURRETS TOUR to interesting churches will be on Saturday May 21 – more details later, but you may like to note the date now!

From Father Stephen:

'Look East' he tells us!

As I sat through my third interview in 24 hours one cold and rainy weekend in January 2003, either through nerves or exhaustion, I found myself saying 'of course that will be no problem – it'll be a pleasure!' to the Rector's statement – "Well, what I'm really looking for is someone who will take on the project we have in mind to open up a worship centre in the Eastern end of the parish and be responsible for running it." As I flew back home to France that evening, I drank more than my usual number of little bottles of Scotch wondering just exactly what I'd agreed to!

Eight months later I arrived, and so began the long haul of decisions as to what shape and form the project was going to take. 'Look East' was born. Originally planned to open up in the old Infant School kitchens; the final choice of venue was the St Mary's Tower, fitting of course, since it was the site of the original Parish Church, and was to be due restored under the auspices of the Friends of Hornsey Church Tower.

Such a project requires an enormous amount of work (with an equal amount of stress!), and even more enormous amounts of prayer – but with the support from so many people (and I'm sure that many have done far more work than I have!!), the project is almost at the end of the development stage and at the time of writing this, twenty-two months after having said 'Yes' – worship has indeed begun at the eastern end of the parish. On Sunday 3 October, The Feast of Dedication, St Mary's Chapel opened its doors, and once again God's praises echoed around and from its walls, as it now does **every Sunday at 9.30am**. A warm welcome awaits you there. What an exciting and positive note that a church is opening instead of closing. What a great message of confidence and hope for the Parish of Hornsey and for the Friends of the Tower. What a wonderful future we have here in this the corner of North London. May Jesus Christ be praised!