

NEWSLETTER FOR JULY 2012

Farewell to NTMTC; welcome to Wapping High School

In 2005 the dioceses of London and Chelmsford converted the eastern part of our crypt (at significant cost, and under licence from the parish) to provide accommodation for the **North Thames Ministerial Training Course**, a non-residential course for ordinands, and more recently for Readers/Licensed Lay Ministers too, from both dioceses. Their office moved here from North London, and it then also became one of the three evening teaching centres - the others being Chelmsford Cathedral and St Paul's Onslow Square. This marked a clear and welcome commitment to offer training in an East London setting - important for candidates from this area (including the Barking episcopal area of Chelmsford) but also for those from more suburban parishes. It was on this basis that the decision was made to bring the Stepney Area Reader training scheme, previously free-standing, under its aegis, so that Readers and ordinands might train together, and other area schemes in the diocese followed suit.

NTMTC, while retaining its distinct identity is now part of the regional training partnership known as **St Mellitus College**, in which the major partner is St Paul's Theological Centre, initially established by Holy Trinity Brompton. From this autumn, all administration will be centred on newly-converted premises in West London, at St Jude Courtfield Gardens, and teaching here will also cease. This is partly for the sake of greater integration and more efficient use of resources, but is also finance-led at a time when there is a national crisis in the funding of ordination training (including the withdrawal of grants for some students).

We have enjoyed 'hosting' NTMTC here, both in their own space, and for the shared meal in part of the nursery and worship in church that are a feature of their weekly programme. The Rector - who some years ago was a staff member of a similar course in the north of England - has got to know many of the candidates by being around on Tuesdays, teaching the voluntary New Testament Greek class each week and being an occasional tutor for other modules. The course has helped to put St George-in-the-East on the map as a good training base. We shall be sorry to see them go, not because we shall lose income (for the diocese will continue to pay us the agreed rental under the licence) but because it marks a withdrawal from an urban to a suburban context. They may make occasional forays east, for example for mosque and synagogue visits, or to study particular local projects, but that is not quite the same! There are, however, other developments afoot: the Bishop of Stepney is strongly committed to establishing an **internship programme** in East London (for which a full-time director will shortly be appointed) which will give young people from a variety of traditions and backgrounds - not just gap-year students! - a two-year experience of urban life and ministry, living locally in community. And we still have the Contextual Theology Centre, based at St Katharine's, which will be a partner in this project.

<http://www.stmellitus.org/ntmtc>

<http://www.theology-centre.org/>

In the event, 'Crypt East' (as it is known to the postal authorities) will not stand empty, for as we reported in May, it will be used on a temporary basis by **Wapping High School** as a base for their administration and some teaching, with most other teaching in the crypt at St Paul Shadwell and at Pollyanna in Wapping, until their more permanent site on Commercial Road is ready. The children - initially between 40 and 60 year 7 pupils - will assemble here at the start of the day (8.30am) and then move to the other sites as appropriate.

A group of local parents keen to see co-educational secondary provision in our corner of the borough are behind this initiative, and the intention is that it will recruit locally, from the area curiously designated by the authorities as 'south Wapping' (can anyone tell us where 'north Wapping' might be?), despite their having so far been unable to identify a permanent site in this locality - though this remains their long-term hope. Some of our readers may well have reservations about the whole free school agenda, but the Rector has already discovered in working with the headteacher Paul Guénault (who, as explained previously, by coincidence he knew as a teenager in Lancaster!) that there is a genuine commitment to the local area and to working in partnership with others, including the local authority. So we offer them a warm welcome.

<http://www.wappinghigh.org/>

Wokingham

Thousands of pictures - or so it felt - were taken during our enjoyable parish trip to Wokingham on 23 June, so slide shows can be offered of our departure from church in a smart Tower Hamlets bus (maintaining the tradition of chalking the wheel for a sweepstake on the number at the top on arrival - which Wendy won), of arrival at Alex' parents' house and eating our lunch in the sunshine, of fruit and vegetable picking, for which the rain just about held off, and of a wonderful high tea. Sue and Robert were most generous hosts, and it was lovely to get out of

London for the day - though one or two found the countryside too quiet and missed the reassuring background music of sirens, building noise and bin lorries! Our warm thanks to them, and to Alex for doing all the organising.

Capt Hugh Askew Corbett CBE DSO DSC

It's astonishing to think that one of the sons of our Rector from 1903-19, **Frederick St John Corbett**, has only recently died (on 12 April)! This was only possible because his father was elderly when he was born, and he himself lived to the age of 95, after a long, distinguished and courageous naval career. On retirement in 1969 he became the warden of the University Centre Cambridge (a social centre for postgraduate students), and was the vice-chairman of the Churches' Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies - an organisation in which another Hugh - Montefiore, Bishop of Birmingham and a Jewish convert - was also active. The family had provided altar cruets for the new church in 1965, and in 1993 he visited the parish and provided copies of photographs and documents from his father's time here. Two obituaries can be read here -

<http://www.stgite.org.uk/media/hughcorbett.pdf>

- one by his grandson Tom, who has provided us with news of some of the other clerical family members, and is glad to know that his great-grandfather is remembered here.



Looking back, and looking ahead



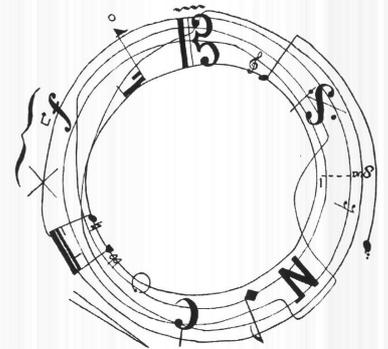
It was a delight to welcome **St Andrew's University Madrigal Group** to sing a concert here on 2 June, as part of their summer tour. (It came about through Philippa Boardman, Vicar of St Paul Old Ford, godmother of one of the singers.) An accomplished choir with a wide repertoire - the first half was from the traditional English madrigal repertoire, the second from partsongs from the 19th to the 21st century - they engaged winningly with the audience, sharing stories of life in our most northerly university, including some of the complex

details about their distinctive red gowns.

<http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~madgroup/>

On 28 June Fred Thomas, the animator of the **F-IRE Collective and Kammer Klang**, presented another brilliant programme. The first half was a sequence of Bach chorale preludes, originally written for organ and arranged by Fred for piano (himself), violin (Aisha Orazbayeva) and cello (Lucy Railton); the second half was an extended improvisation with Jiri Slavik (double bass) and prepared piano (the Broadwood - it's good to see both our pianos being used!) They are all musicians of the highest calibre, and are currently recording some of their repertoire, here and elsewhere: we'll give details in due course. They enjoy coming here, and we are glad to be associated with this friendly and creative network. More concerts will follow in the autumn.

http://www.f-ire.com/site/bands/478/f-ire_klang_codex



We celebrated the **Birth of John the Baptist** on Sunday 24 June, and were reminded that this was the birthday of another clerical 'St John' [see above] - one of our best-remembered former Rectors **St John Beverley Groser**. The 'Beverley' bit came from the remote Australian cattle station where he was born to missionary parents. [Nowadays - for how much longer? - there is a Bishop of Beverley, who is the 'flying bishop' (for those who do not accept ordained women) for the northern province. This caused some confusion when a previous holder of this post visited his god-daughter - an ordained women - in hospital, and the staff reported that 'someone called Beverley is here to see you'.]

<http://www.stgite.org.uk/groser.html>

Fr Groser went on from here (after a sabbatical in Germany*) to become the first Master of the reconstituted **Royal Foundation of St Katharine** in 1948 - where Olive Wagastaff was one of the original members of the residential lay community. His most recent successor in the post, **Prebendary David Paton** - who like Fr Groser has also served with distinction in local parishes, including St Mary Cable Street and in the City - retires in September, and we give thanks for his ministry and friendship among us. The **Revd Mark Aitken**, the head of an

independent school in Ramsgate, has been appointed as his successor; and we look forward to welcoming him; so far we know nothing of him, but the Foundation is part of the 'Highway cluster'.

<http://www.rfsk.org.uk/>

* 'After a sabbatical in Germany....' - links with German churches since the war years have been important, with much work done on Christian reconciliation, and the links are not recognised in the Meissen agreement between our two traditions. Tower Hamlets churches (especially on the Isle of Dogs) have had various visits in both directions, and on St John Baptist's day we welcomed a group of young people from three churches in the **diocese of Berlin** who were staying locally for a programme including mosque and synagogue visits, before going on to Coventry Cathedral, since they are part of the Cross of Nails community based there. It was good to hear the Gospel read in German.

<http://www.frieden-charlottenburg.de/>

<http://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/work-other-churches/europe/the-meissen-agreement.aspx>

<http://www.crossofnails.org/>

St Paul's School came to church for **Founder's Day** on 29 June. As this year it fell on St Peter's Day, we offer our greetings and prayers to our neighbours at **St Peter London Docks**. One of the original mission chapels that grew into our 'daughter' church of St Peter's (a Victorian church plant!) was St Saviour and St Cross, housed in the former Danish chapel in Wellclose Square, demolished in 1869 to make way for the school that **Dan Greator**, Vicar of St Paul Dock Street [then a separate parish], established with typical energy and entrepreneurship. He had been a strong opponent of the high church mission! There is never any shortage of topics for the children to explore as they mark this day and find out about the fascinating history of their school and its many associated institutions.

<http://www.stgite.org.uk/media/stpaulsschool.html>

<http://www.stgite.org.uk/greatorex.html>

<http://www.st-pauls.towerhamlets.sch.uk/>

<http://www.stpeterslondondocks.org.uk/>

<http://peterite.blogspot.co.uk/>

Another former 'daughter' church - established in 1850 by another of our Victorian entrepreneurs, whom somehow we always term 'the redoubtable' William Quekett - was St Mary Cable Street [see above]. Its current priest, **Fr Peter McGeary** - who has been a good friend of St George-in-the-East, not least during the extended vacancy - celebrates the silver jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood on Thursday 5 July. After exposition of the sacrament and private prayer at 6pm and the eucharist at 7pm (at which some of Peter's many musical friends will no doubt provide some high-class singing) there will be drinks, inside or outside depending on the weather, and all are invited. In the autumn there will be further celebrations to mark Peter's marriage! We give thanks for his friendship, his ministry as a priest, and his encyclopaedic knowledge of every corner of the organ and choral repertoire, and wish him well as he commits matrimony....

During July, two '**Jellicoe interns**', Austin Tiffany (from Baylor University, Texas) and Jonathan Goddard (from Brasenose College Oxford - a happy coincidence, since all our Rectors from 1729 to 1863 were Fellows of the college, when patronage passed out of their hands), will be lodging at the Rectory and involved in local church and community projects. Here is yet another link with the Royal Foundation of St Katharine. More about them, and their doings, next month.

<http://angus.myzen.co.uk/jellicoe-community>

283rd Anniversary of Consecration
FESTAL EUCHARIST 10.15am
followed by a barbecue in the Rectory garden
ALL WELCOME - DETAILS TO FOLLOW

Among our various members with Caribbean roots are a few Jamaicans, including Anne Willer (who recently made her first-ever flight, to visit her grand-daughter in northern Sweden: a memorable trip and a great success!), to all of whom we offer our good wishes on the 50th anniversary of **Jamaican independence**, which falls on 22 July, and for which various celebratory events have been planned.

<http://www.jis.gov.jm/ja50/v2/>

And then come the **Olympic and Paralympic Games**! It is hard to assess precisely what the local impact will be, though it will certainly affect daily life for everyone round here. We are working with the **Highway Neighbours** project (one more St Katharine's link, for Caitlin, funded as its officer, works from there). As you will see from a

maildrop in the next couple of weeks, this is offering information and advice, and whatever practical help we can, throughout the period. Church will be open - as it always is - from 8am to 6pm, as a place where locals and visitors alike can find some space and quiet.

The diocese has created a series of **church walks** around various parts of London, and Tower Hamlets churches have responded strongly to this - too many to visit in one day! Leaflets and other material will be available for this. We have also offered the panelled room as a possible **drop-in centre**, which will be staffed by Highway Neighbours volunteers depending on the level of demand, and will offer wifi, loos and hot drinks. More immediately, Highway Neighbours has organised a **public meeting for the Wapping area** with speakers from Transport for London (presentation, followed by a question and answer session chaired by Fr Jones) and the Tower Hamlets Olympic project team on youth provision. This will be at 7pm on Monday 2 July at St Peter's School, Garnett Street E1W 3QT.

<http://www.highwayneighbours.org/>

Please note that, because of the Olympics and other holiday arrangements, there will be no 12.30pm Eucharist on Tuesdays after 17 July until September.

And finally....

We have been promised more pictures of the **peregrine falcon** chicks, which we will post on the website when they arrive.

We will be advancing our church's annual contribution to **Water Aid**, since the government has offered to match anything given in the next 90 days. If you wish to add a personal contribution to this eminently practical scheme seeking to provide reliable and clean water supplies for all as a basic human right, has a strong track record, and addresses what is an increasingly divisive issue for many parts of the world, please let us have it.

<http://www.wateraid.org/>

Here is an example, from the year 1842, of how not to fashion your prayers....

A DISINTERESTED PRAYER, à la 'HOLY WILLIE'

O Lord, thou knowest that I have nine houses in the city of London, and likewise that I have lately purchased an estate in fee simple in the county of Essex. Lord, I beseech thee to preserve the two counties Essex and Middlesex from fires and earthquakes, and as I have a mortgage in Hertfordshire, I beg thee likewise to have an eye of compassion on that county. And Lord, for the rest of the counties, thou mayest deal with them as thou art pleased. O Lord, enable the bank to answer all their bills, and make all my debtors good men. Give a prosperous voyage and return to the Mermaid sloop, which I have insured. And Lord, thou hast said "The days of the wicked are short," and I trust thou wilt not forget thy promises, having purchased an estate in reversion of Sir I P —, a profligate young man. Lord, keep our funds from sinking, and if it be thy will, let there be no sinking fund. Keep my son Caleb out of evil company, and from gaming houses, and sanctify, O Lord, this night to me by preserving me from thieves and fire, and making my servants honest and careful. Whilst I, thy servant, lie down in thee, O Lord. Amen.