

Fiona Jenkins, Turton Tower Manager

It is nine months since Blackburn with Darwen took over managing the Tower from Lancashire County Council and what a nine months that has been! Such a lot has been going on 'behind the scenes' and has firmly established the Authority's commitment to the future of the Tower not only in terms of ensuring funding but also in terms of planning for the future.

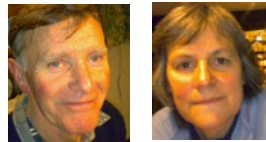


The most significant initiative is the undertaking of a Conservation Management Plan which is in progress as I write this. I cannot emphasise to you enough how important this document is. It essentially pulls together survey work and historical research to help BwD understand the building and the estate. As a result, it will inform decision making and assist us in working within the guidelines set down by English Heritage, on caring for the property. Simultaneously a major programme of repair work has been planned for roofs, chimneys and other parts of the building. As a result as soon as the Conservation Management Plan is completed, the programme can be fine tuned and dates set for the work to be carried out, at times which will minimise the impact on visitors to the Tower.

Indeed focusing on our visitors and the visitor experience has been another key initiative I and other BwD officers have turned our attention to. A qualitative survey has been undertaken and has confirmed our belief that visitors expectations are exceeded as they explore what Turton Tower has to offer. However there is always room for improvement! There are some small yet significant changes to be made that will enhance the visitor experience over the forthcoming season. Why not come and sample them for yourself? The Tower staff and I look forward to seeing you soon!

Introducing new members of the Committee.

Bill and Cilla Duncalf



"We first became aware of the Friends of Turton Tower a couple of years ago when we saw a notice in Harwood library about Turton Fair, went along, had a brilliant day & joined the FoTT. Since then we have been on a trip to Manchester town hall with the Friends, & also attended musical evenings at the tower. We volunteered at the Fair in 2009, doing car parking & helping Callista in the tea room, & also at the ferret racing day. We were most pleased to be invited to join the committee at the last AGM."

The next issue, April, will up-date the articles in this issue and will include an article on the social side of being a "Friend of Turton Tower". Don't miss it.

STOP PRESS

New opening Times for the Tower

Wed – Sun 12.00 – 5.00pm

Closed Mon & Tues except Bank Holidays

New opening Times for the Tea Room

From the 12th Feb to 3rd March
Open Fri to Sun 12.00 to 5.00pm

From the 3rd March
Open every day except Tuesday

FRIENDS OF TURTON TOWER NEWSLETTER

Issue No 1



January 2010

Welcome to the first issue of our NEWSLETTER. It is our intention to publish four times a year in an attempt to keep you informed about both the Friends activities and the Tower events. There will be regular articles keeping you informed about development of the Tower by its new owners, Blackburn with Darwen Council, up-dates on progress with Projects and articles about the social side of being a "Friend"..

Suggestions for articles would be welcome:

E-mail b.sharp1@ntlworld.com

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- 3 Projects up-date
- 4 Fiona Jenkins, Tower Manager about what has been happening recently at the Tower.
- 5 Meet the new committee members

6 STOP PRESS
NEW OPENING TIMES

Hello Everyone

May I wish you a very happy new year and start by congratulating the editor, Bill Sharples, for getting this, his first edition of the FoTT Newsletter, off the ground.



Perhaps my first contribution should set the scene for both members and non-members of the association.

Turton Tower is a Grade 1 listed building and our association exists to promote, support, improve and assist the management of the Tower. Membership is open to all and we have an elected committee to manage the affairs of the association. The committee meets monthly and, several times each year, holds open committee meetings to which all members are invited. We have a membership of nearly 300 of which a number are family memberships. So you will understand that we are a strong organisation which arranges a number of activities throughout the year. The friends are also consulted on wider issues connected with the running and future of the Tower; this has been especially so since Blackburn with Darwen took over responsibility for the Tower in May 2009. Our most recent events were to Chatsworth in November to see the decorations and we had carol singing with mulled wine and mince pies in the quadrangle just before Christmas.

During the past financial year we raised over £10000 for the Tower and at the last A.G.M. had a bank balance of about £27000. Much of this has now been earmarked for funding specific projects.

We will always make new members welcome and are constantly looking for volunteers to help with events or to assist Fiona, the Tower Manager, with work or activities in the Tower. I hope you will feel that you would like to join us in helping to preserve such an important historic site and find ways of constructively using a beautiful old building.

John Grove

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2010

Events organised by the Friends of Turton Tower are in RED

Events organised by the Tower Management are in BLUE

February

20th Feb 10.00 am Garden Day

March

March 4th Doreen Hough at 2.00pm
"My Childhood at the Tower"

March 12th Trip to Manchester Town Hall
and JR Library

March 20th 10.00 am Garden Day

April

April 17th; Regency Re-jigged; dancers
performing 17th and 18th century dances,
dressed in costume.

April 24th 10.00am Garden Day

May

May 31st Turton Fair

June

June 13th, Fell Race, starting and finishing
at the Tower. TO BE CONFIRMED.;

July

August

August 1st Trip to Chester Races

August 30th, Car Treasure Hunt; TO BE
CONFIRMED.

September

Sept 26th, Fantastic Frolicking Ferrets, TO
BE CONFIRMED.

October

Oct, Art Exhibition in the Tower.

November

Nov 18th Annual General Meeting

Nov 20th, Jazz at St Anne's; TO BE
CONFIRMED.

December

Dec 3rd, Carols at the TOWER.

March

March 3rd Tower re-opens to the public

March 14th Children's activity for Mothers Day

March 26th "Pretty Witty Nell" £8.50

Display of swordsmanship TO BE CONFIRMED

April

April 7th Bird Box Building (partnership LCC)
Play activity (Play Rangers)

May

Mellstock Band – folk music TO BE CONFIRMED

June

June 2nd Join Countryside Officer Ian Hart and
explore the Tower grounds

Half-term: Bird Box Building (partnership LCC)

June 12th Bike Bonanza: Historic Bikes and bike
race

June 13th Summer Seed Planting

July

July 9th, 10th, 11th "The Tempest" by William
Shakespeare

July 24th Launch of "Walking Festival" TO BE
CONFIRMED

July 30th Play Rangers (outside)

August

August 6th "The Secret Garden" by Francis
Hodgson

August 8th Summer Seed Planting

August 31st Wacky Warpers Walk

September

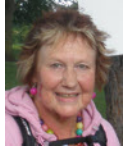
Sept. 29/30th Sarah Jay Art Exhibition

October

Oct. 1st to 31st Sarah Jay Art Exhibition
"Terrific Trees" with Ian Hart TO BE
CONFIRMED

PROJECT UP-DATES

Walled Garden Restoration Project. Led by Anna Harvey.



During the winter 2008/2009 I began my interest in restoring the walled kitchen garden at Turton Tower.

I was a member of Lancashire Gardens Trust working on research of historic gardens in the Lancashire area. Many of them had had kitchen gardens, some had been restored, others hadn't and I began to wonder about that possibility at Turton. I had only seen the garden from afar; a tangled area of brambles, ferns and nettles. But I could see there was a possibility of restoration. It was not so huge it would take forever to clear; the wall was still intact as were the gate posts and in the top corner was a wonderful broken down stone ruin that was once a "garden shed".

I contacted Sue Jeffries, a horticulturist who had written an essay on Turton garden and included a description of the walled garden; Ian Trickett who was a Friends committee member and also a horticulturist and had knowledge of plants, trees etc. We met up and gathered a few more interested bodies willing to be involved with what was going to be a big challenge.

We contacted Myerscough College with a view to getting volunteers to clear the garden first and foremost. They could not help us so I contacted Friends of Turton Tower to see if anyone was interested in volunteering for the hard graft of clearing. Amazingly in the month of March 2009, 15 people turned up with wellies, spades, gloves and a lot of enthusiasm to commence clearing.

The garden had already got beds laid out under the brambles so we began clearing each bed. A willow compost corner has been created, and we put the cleared material over the fence and have created a natural habitat for insects.

Over the next nine months we gradually cleared the whole area; we met monthly and by the beginning of December we had cleared the beds, cleared the paths all the way round and could now see the total area. We had also felled a few small bushes/trees giving the area a sense of space that had not been there before.

We could now move on to the next stage.

During the first stage a small group of us had met regularly to plan future developments; we had designed the garden in a Victorian style, we had considered obtaining financial support for equipment and we were beginning to look at the possibility of restoring the "shed" in the corner.

The project is moving forward slowly but purposely; we have volunteers who have enthusiasm and commitment which enables us to "plough on" with restoring the garden which we hope will be a valuable asset to Turton Tower.



If anyone is interested in helping/ advising/ please contact me; this project is a long term challenge but hopefully will benefit the community and public who visit the Tower.

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