

St Nicholas Bulletin

No 5

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Dear Friends

The first news is that this coming week the church will be covered by a plastic protective cover, surrounding the scaffolding frame. A clever roof will be put on as well which will allow future contractors to remove sections when they need to crane materials inside. This will complete the first stage of making the building safe, and will be the last time the church will be seen until the new restoration and rebuilding is complete.

The second piece of news is that the Bishop of Warwick has asked me to stay on to help oversee this reconstruction work – which is a great relief ! He is currently working out the details of my new licence, but at least we know that we shan't have to move again until this work is complete.

As our attention moves into the next stage of work, we have been able to appoint an architect from a firm in London who are specialists in restoring and re-ordering churches. We are very excited, as their track record is stunningly good – they are currently completing the £36m restoration of St Martins in the Fields (the church overlooking Trafalgar Sq), and have worked on some other significant national treasures, including the Tower of London, Wells cathedral, and Leeds Castle, to name but a few. So we shall be in excellent hands !

As a thorough survey begins on the walls and tower, we shall soon discover how much of the stonework has been irreparably damaged and will need to be replaced. This will be the next stage of the work, and when contractors will return to the site. This work will need the approval of the Diocesan authorities and English Heritage, who are due to visit the church in July. We are also working through details of various elements of the church fabric that have been lost so that the Insurance Company can cover these fairly. We have discovered that the East window was not a Kempe window (Kempe was a prolific and high quality stained glass window designer in the 19th century). We had been led to believe that we had one of his works, but sadly this is not the case. However, the artist who made our Millennium window is on the case, and has come up with some suggestions of other makers.



Once the current contractors have left the site, we will hopefully be able to open the churchyard again for visitors, but on a supervised basis only. We are having some temporary steps put in from the path so that no-one slips on the grass, and on our next bulletin, I will publish times when someone will be there to open the churchyard to any visitors. We will also be able to open the cremation area at the same time. This will be a great relief to many, though there will still be some inaccessible graves within the fencing. These are fully protected underneath the scaffolding.

Thank you once again for your understanding and support. As we

move into a more exciting and creative phase of work, we give great thanks to God that everyone working on the Church has been kept safe, and has provided us with such a sensitive and careful service.

Rev Martin Green

7 June 2008