



Oliver Rundell at the organ.

Appeal for historic organ

It is Easter Sunday, 1912 at St Jude's, Whitechapel. The morning service over, the Reverend Ernest Carter and his wife Lillian stand at the back of their church and bid farewell to their friends and family as they prepare to take a well-earned holiday. With the best wishes of their parishioners and the thunderous cadences of the church organ ringing in their ears, the Carters go home to the vicarage and turn their thoughts to America and the trip of a lifetime that lies ahead.

The Carters left Southampton on board RMS *Titanic* on April 10th. As the 14th was a Sunday, Carter held a short service in the ship's library. That evening, the ship struck an iceberg and sank two and a half hours later.

St Jude's in Whitechapel was demolished some time after the *Titanic* disaster, yet, curiously, survivors from both tragedies came together in 1991.

In St Jude's, Whitechapel, stood a fine pipe organ built in 1896 by Henry Willis. When the church was demolished, Dame Henrietta Barnett had the organ moved to the newly built St Jude-on-the-Hill in Hampstead Garden Suburb.

Back to 1912, and the RMS *Titanic*, where seven-year-old Eva Hart had attended Ernest

Carter's service. Eva survived the disaster, and when she heard that the PCC at St Jude's were raising money to restore the Willis organ she gladly agreed to visit the church and tell a spell-bound audience the story of all that she witnessed that terrible night in 1912.

Eva's visit to St Jude's marked one of the first fund-raising activities to be held to raise money for the organ appeal. A total of £135,000 is needed to restore the instrument to its former glory and to replace the existing worn-out console. Since Eva came to St Jude's there have been a host of fundraising events (including, of course, the highly acclaimed Proms at St Jude's) and the total raised so far is now approaching £100,000.

The organ is long overdue for serious refurbishment. There are over 2500 pipes in the organ, of which many are broken or in need of urgent repair. The electrical system dates from 1934 and has been unreliable for many years. The leather bellows that store air and supply them to the pipes are leaking and becoming increasingly fragile. The organ's blowing mechanism is regularly flooded, blowing water inside the instrument, which causes wood to warp, split and rot.

Titanic sank in 1912 and St Jude's Whitechapel was demolished, Eva Hart died in 1996, but we hope that the Willis organ can survive well into the twenty-first century.

The PCC of St Jude's is determined to complete the project which Eva helped to start. With the help of all those who know, love and support St Jude's and all it stands for, the organ will continue to speak to the people of the Suburb for at least another sixty years, in the regular church services, at weddings, funerals, concerts and recitals.

Accompanying this edition of Suburb News there is a leaflet with which you can make a donation to this important appeal. Please give as much as you can, to preserve our heritage and the vision of Dame Henrietta Barnett, on whose initiative the organ was moved from Whitechapel to the Suburb.

More information about the church, the organ, its specification and further appeal details may be found at the church's informative and acclaimed website: www.stjudes.org.uk.

Thank you for your help and support.

OLIVER RUNDELL

Creeping into Spring

Over the last few months I have thought that it might be quite comforting to live in a block of flats, preferably in the middle. I wouldn't have to worry about gale force winds scattering the tiles from the roof or about serious flooding in the garden and my plants just rotting as I look at them. I could always go to Golders Hill park and pretend it was my garden. But as we creep into spring things start to happen. The weather is less cruel, the days longer and gradually things warm up, we forget the misery of the last few months and get very excited about the prospect of our gardens in the coming season. I really have so much to do, the autumn lasted so long and we had so much rain that I didn't put my garden to bed as I normally do.

Lots of plants are in flower in February. My sarcococa have been flowering since December but are still going strong and the perfume by my front door is quite heady. I have a Daphne Bholua which is supposed to be the best for flowers and perfume but nothing has happened yet. I



the dark blue varieties are Etoile Violette, Polish Spirit and Blue Belle Huldine is a beautiful white. I think I shall be giving these a try this year.

April is the time to get busy with a granular fertiliser around shrubs and hedges and also a good time to divide clumps of snowdrops while they are in the green. It is best to hand weed as all sorts of treasures are popping up and being a little heavy-handed with fork and spade can cause havoc. I know I am guilty of this. There has been one

surprised to discover that the Suburb consists of 5000 homes and yet the horticultural society has only 122 houses/people as members. Isn't that sad, especially as we are called a Garden Suburb? It would be nice if we could encourage more of you out there to join and hopefully you might be tempted by all the new projects on offer.

On March 27 we are having an illustrated presentation given by Stephen Crisp who is the head gardener at Winfield House, the home of the American Ambassador. I have been fortunate enough to see the house and extensive grounds and this really is something that you should not miss. Put the date in your new diary now but look out for times in the near future.

On May 12 we are having a day out to Goodnestone Park in Kent. This is the home of Lord and Lady Fitzwalter, a magnificent pile set in grounds of approximately fourteen acres. The house is surrounded with a formal planting and fine oak specimen trees; an avenue of limes leads to a small arboretum. This adjoins a mature woodland



have had it for a couple of years but I am led to believe they are very slow. Garryas are a welcome sight with their silky catkins and the Mahonia have been magnificent since December. We are very fortunate living in the south because we really can have something in flower for every month of the year.

February is an ideal time for planting new trees, shrubs and roses and if your hedge looks a bit moth-eaten you can plant privet now. However, now is not a good time for pruning roses as a warm spell can encourage new growth which will only be zapped by spring frosts. Best wait until March. The beginning of March is the time to prune Clematis, and I think we all get into a bit of a tizzy with this job. I have kept all my labels and just refer to them year after year but a little tip to remember is... if they flower before June, don't prune.

I was reading an article about Clematis of the Viticella group. Apparently they are much easier than the large hybrids, do not suffer from wilt and it is also possible to cut the blossoms for a vase. The Viticellas, because of their diversity and vigour, are natural companions to shrubs and roses and in the autumn you cut them down to ground level thus making it far easier to protect the crowns in severe weather conditions, if necessary. A few names to look out for in

plant in my garden that has stood the test all through winter rain and gales and it is *Stipa arundinacea*. I grow it in pots and in my herbaceous bed and it hasn't let me down. Even in the middle of winter the golden colours were beautiful and in the summer it produces metre-long fronds of seedheads rather like candyfloss. Keep a look out for it at our plant sale on May 19.

As from last November I have become involved with our local horticultural society so in future articles I shall be mentioning one or two things that I think might be of interest. I was very

area with a 1920's rockery and pond. Finally see the walled garden stuffed with goodies. There is a restaurant and, most important of all, a nursery with plants propagated from the garden. I visited the garden in 1988 but so much more has been achieved since then that I am really looking forward to a return visit. If any of you have *The Garden* magazine there is an excellent article by Stephen Lacey in the October edition.

There will be more dates to look out for in my next article but until then - good gardening.

DIANE BERGER

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