

HISTORY OF SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS ON THE TOWER GARDENS ESTATE (Tottenham N17)

1900s

- 1903: First house built on the estate, on the north side of Lordship Lane in North Tottenham. The whole area was fields and farmland. London County Council are given land in order to build quality housing and gardens an 'urban garden estate' - for working class people currently in overcrowded homes in Tower Hamlets (despite opposition from the local press and Councillors)... hence the estate is named Tower Gardens. However, from the beginning many people refer to it as the 'White Hart Lane Estate', which later comes to cover a much wider area of homes built later on.

1910s

- 1910-11 Local allotment sites laid out.

- 1914: First wave of 954 homes completed, and put on the rented market. The rents are fairly expensive for many who had hoped to move to the estate, and tend to be occupied by working class artisans and the 'working poor'.

- 1914: Residents send delegation to the London County Council to demand a public hall be built on the estate for residents, as originally agreed by the architect in 1911.

- 1914 – 1918 Wartime

1920s

White Hart Lane Estate Welfare Association [WHLEWA], based on the Tower Gardens Estate, is formed in 1919 and organises a wide range of well-supported activities, events, sub-committees etc over the next 20-30 years, including whist drives, dances, sports clubs (including cricket, bowls, netball, tennis, football, cycling and swimming), annual sports days, 'mums and dads' days in August, flower competitions/garden club and a savings/loan club. A monthly Newsletter (delivered by street reps to all homes) is produced up to the 1950s.

- In particular residents continue to campaign unsuccessfully for their own meeting hall, and to be able to meet in the council-run estate office (which the Council refuse).

- Fireworks and bonfires are organised annually in many streets on Nov 5th (at least up to 1945 when the LCC set up 'anti-bonfire patrols').

- Another long-running tradition (which may have continued up till the '80s) is by neighbours commemorating a local death by making financial collections, and laying wreaths on the pavement outside the home of the deceased.

- 1924: Topham Square flats completed.

- New, poorer residents begin to arrive, via LCC waiting lists, in the 1920s and '30s from demolished areas of central London.

- 1929: After 10 years of proudly holding their own garden competitions, the Garden Club is invited by the LCC to take part in an LCC one for local residents. There is controversy when LCC judges produce a disparaging, negative report.

1930s

The WHLEWA lobbies the LCC for improvements for domestic electric lighting, baths, hot water, rent reductions. All requests refused.

- 1936: 10,000 people attend the public opening of Lordship Recreation Ground, opposite the estate.

- 1938: the Loan Club has 800 members it removes £18,000 from their bank for a Christmas payout.

- Street parties held throughout the estate on the date of the royal 'silver jubilee' and also the 1937 coronation (dates tbc).

- Many 'better off' residents move out to the new suburbs in the '30s and '40s.

1940s

- 1939 – 1945 Wartime. Bomb dropped on The Roundway, killing at least one resident. Street parties held throughout the estate at the end of the war to celebrate peace.

- Local Garden Club and Loan Club continue to flourish

- Residents take over the Waltheof Club (which had been a private building) for a community centre.

1950s

- Large and lively sports days organised in 1952 and '53 in the Tower Gardens by the WHLE Residents Association (note name change).

- The Garden Club and Loan club continue to be very active. But the WHLERA newsletter ceases.
- 1959: The Morris House surgery opens one of the first purpose built health clinics in the country.

1960s

- The WHLERA has a brief revival and successfully lobbies Tottenham Council for safety barriers in Tower Gardens park, repairs to local roads and improvements to school toilets and playgrounds.

1970s

- 1978: The pre-1915 parts of the estate (the southern areas ie most of the homes) are designated a Conservation Area.

- Haringey Council take over the management of the estate (from the GLC).

1980s

- 1980: New 'Right to Buy' laws lead to increasing percentage of private ownership of local homes. In 1981 Haringey Council bring in Design Guidelines to protect the historic character of the homes in the conservation area.

- Early '80s: Tower Gardens Estate Conservation Committee very active.
- Tower Gardens Residents Association and other residents campaign for the regeneration of the Tower Gardens park, and for a new Playcentre.
- June 1985 'House and Home', a BBC programme about the estate, is broadcast
- Residents blockade prevents traveller caravans occupying Waltheof green.
- 1988-90 30-40 local residents in 'short-life' accommodation campaign, with some success, for full tenancies. They hold local protests and some evictions are resisted. A well-supported residents petition calls for all local empty properties to be brought into use for the homeless.

1990s

1990: Waltheof Club members campaign for Roundway crossing.

- A neighbours dispute in Tower Gardens Rd leads to a tragic murder.
- Mid -1990s: A neighbourhood watch group is formed for a couple of years.
- Playcentre parents group organise summit meeting over safety in the TGs park.
- 1998: Tower Gardens Residents Network [TGRN] formed. Meets at least monthly throughout the next 5 years. Organises a wide range of activities, public meetings and campaigns, and regularly leaflets the estate. Members receive monthly bulletins.
- The Tower Gardeners gardening club formed. Organises trips, new planting on verges around the estate, and campaigns for improvements to the TGs park.

2000s

- 2000: The TGRN and a firm of consultants each separately conduct a successful survey of residents views and concerns - with similar results. They show traffic calming and better facilities (especially for youth) as top priorities.

- 2000: TGRN launch campaign for traffic calming and Home Zone improvements. Estate officially designated as a 'Home Zone' development area. Major works programme starts in 2001, and continues until 2005.
- 2001: The association actively helps to launch the Haringey Federation of Residents Associations
- Regeneration works are done in the Tower Gardens park following a series of public planning meetings involving the Tower Gardeners, TGRN and Haringey Council.
- TGRN continued to be active until the end of Dec 2003 [membership - 212 households], but declines during 2004.
- A new Tower Gardens Residents Group is formed a couple of years later.

2010s

The TGRG continues to lobby for improvements, conservation and good management of the estate, and organises social events and history walks.

- Supports successful campaign to save Lordship Rec, a third of which had been earmarked for potential housebuilding in a future 'redevelopment' of Broadwater Farm and adjacent social housing estates.