

Friends of the Truro Meeting House

Dedicated to the Preservation of this Historic Truro Landmark



THE NEW YEAR

This past spring and summer saw progress on the handicap accessible walkway and other exterior work held up by last winter's record snow storms.

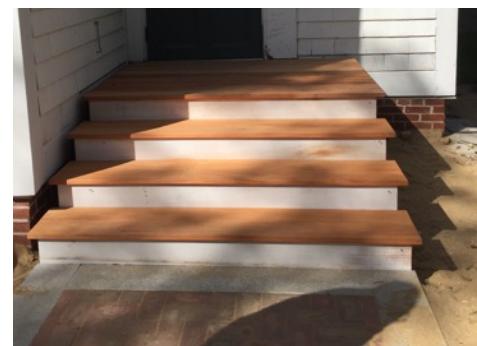
At the Annual Meeting on September 8, new officers were elected: John Marksbury, chair; Nick Norman, Vice Chair; Ann Keenan, Treasurer; and Jonna Sundberg, Secretary. Ann stepped down as Chair after inaugurating and serving in the position for three years, during the last of which she also served as Treasurer. We can't thank Ann enough for her tireless efforts,

wisdom and eagle-eye attention applied to all matters. The Friends have been well launched under her leadership.

What lies ahead? For the near term finishing Phase 2 of the restoration by installing handrails at the new east and west entrances, curbing and new surfacing of Parish Lane, new lighting and seeding the Vestry yard. Finally, to complete the four-year project, a new brick foundation moored by sturdy concrete piers will support the Meeting House for many years to come.

Our own Friends contributions will be used to perform much needed tree work, repairing and painting the Schoolroom, and installing new stage lighting in the coming year. At the same time we have created a Reserve Fund that we hope will grow over time to meet unforeseen major repairs.

The most exciting item on the Wish List is restoration of the Revere Bell as described elsewhere. What a perfect capstone to the Meeting House restoration. As one member said, "It will be the jewel in the crown."



FUNDS SOUGHT FOR REVERE BELL

Will the historic Revere Bell ever ring again? That has been a question on many minds in town following the report last January issued by one of the world's leading bell manufacturers and restorers, which found the condition of the bronze bell that has pealed from the Truro Meeting House belfry for 188 years so severely compromised that the report recommended no further use without a thorough restoration.

With final funding in hand for the last phase of preserving the Meeting House, the Friends of the Truro Meeting House have submitted a Truro Community Preservation Act grant application to the Community Preservation Committee to restore the prized bell. The work is estimated to cost \$48,598, and will be performed by the Verdin Bell Company of Cincinnati, Ohio, a firm with a respected history of its own going back as a family business to 1842.

Verdin is considered the leading restorer of bells in the country and, as pictured here, has recently restored the Revere Bell at the 1717 Barnstable Meeting House, a



Restored Revere Foundry Bell being installed by Verdin at the 1717 Barnstable Meeting House.

project using that town's CPA funds.

The high cost to restore the Truro Revere Bell results not only from original casting defects, but also because repairs made previously to the bell support were incorrectly done and in danger of failing. The bell has been placed on

blocking until funding will permit the proper repairs.

As in Barnstable, the work will require removing and reinstalling the bell by crane and then shipment to and from the Verdin foundry in Ohio. A new crown will be cast and the badly worn clapper replaced. The project also will include a new A-stand frame, wheel and yoke. The new yoke will be manufactured using quarter sawn white oak to replicate the appearance of the current wooden one.

Friends Chair John Marksbury had an opportunity to visit the Verdin foundry recently while in Cincinnati and took the photos below during his tour of the facility. If funds are awarded, we hope the prized bell will ring again in 2017 and, it is hoped, enjoyed for many years after.



HISTORIAN'S CORNER -

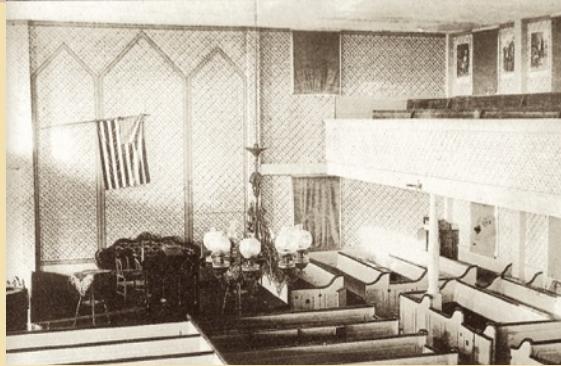
Events: A Long Tradition

by Carlotta Zilliax

This summer the Meeting House welcomed over 700 people – up from 490 the previous year. A variety of programs from poetry readings and dance tunes to a talk on new treatments for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder offered interest to wide-ranging audiences.

I find it intriguing to discover the *historical context* for community events at our Meeting House. While the building has always been a house of worship, it has from its beginning also served a wider function for the people of Truro, fostering the cohesiveness of the town. Before such gathering places as Town Hall, the Community Center, and a Central School existed, the Meeting House was *the* gathering place and home (until 1840) to Town Meetings. And we know from Deacon Davis, our builder, that at least one temperance meeting speaker (1859) was stern enough to make the rum sellers wish they had stayed at home.

It was hard in a small 19th C town to draw a line between the functions of church and



state. We might think a lending library the business of town government, but the 1840's and 1850's saw a flourishing one run by, and housed in, the church, some of whose volumes and lists of borrowers remain in Meeting House collections. More surprising is the committee of inquiry into misdemeanors held by church officers in 1840 who examined witnesses claiming that a certain fisherman was lying about stealing mackerel from the captain who employed him, and it investigated the charge that a local doctor was mistreating his servant. In the end they found the fisherman guilty and restricted him from church for a time, and the doctor they found innocent.

The Congregational Society put on plays at Town Hall and hosted church suppers. "Come to Truro, one and all" reads one bill for the Society's Christmas Fair and Entertainment followed by an Oyster supper. Town folk

came every Friday night for bean suppers. More recently, Ilona Kinzer presented dramatic readings from Jane Austen and Samuel Beckett. People still talk about enjoying the

variety of popular musicians and singers Joan Stevens brought to the well-attended summer series known as the Twilight Concerts (1982-96). In 2001 Guy Strauss and Nobel winner Derek Walcott directed Payomet actors in a performance of Walcott's play *Walker and the Ghost Dance*, a sensitive exploration of the clash between the U.S. Army and the Sioux Warriors led by Sitting Bull.

Certainly the role of the church in the community has changed, but the events of the 2015 summer suggest there remains a place for uplifting music and the thoughtful consideration of serious issues. And that place is open to all.



We Appreciate your Support
Friends of the Truro Meeting House, Inc.

Located at 3 First Parish Lane, near Truro Town Hall
PO Box 149, Truro, MA 02666
email:truromeetinghousefriends@gmail.com

Board of Directors

John Marksbury, Chair
Nick Norman, Vice-Chair
Ann Keenan, Treasurer
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Elizabeth Haskell
Carlotta Dyer Zilliax

Advisory Council
Mary Cassel
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Website

<http://www.truromeetinghousefriends.org>

The Friends of the Truro Meeting House is recognized by the IRS as a charitable non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization.

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OUR MEMBERSHIP

by Ann Keenan

Looking back on what has been accomplished since the founding of the Friends of the Truro Meeting House in 2012 is to see the response of more than 146 people to our requests to preserve the Meeting House – 43 founding members contributed \$19,020, and in 2013 membership increased to 92 with \$12,705 in contributions. Last year 99 members gave \$12,610. In addition to these individuals, the Town of Truro Community Preservation Act has provided funds to evaluate the building, stabilize the structure, shore up the foundation, and make the interior and exterior handicap-accessible. The support of the voters at the Annual Town

Meeting for the past three years has been proof of everyone's desire to preserve the Meeting House as an active and vibrant community gathering place. The significant grants from the Town meant that major restoration projects, supervised by the Friends, could be initiated and thereby prevent further deterioration. We should all take pride in what we have achieved together.

Looking ahead, the Friends must maintain their enthusiasm for the Meeting House as the many costs of maintaining this historic building will obviously continue. To date, the most recent Friends' expenditure was the evaluation of the

Revere Foundry Bell by the Verdin Company; usual expenses include cleaning and assisting with paying insurance. Also, the Friends have paid for Architectural Access Board plans, painting the exterior, painting interior window trim, and more.

The support and cooperation of so many people has brought us to a new phase in the history of the Meeting House. As out-going Chair, I thank and praise all who have supported us with their time, energy, enthusiasm, hard work, and donations, and ask that the sense of collaboration that has been generated since 2012 continue long into the future.