

Friends of Lytham Hall Newsletter

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Issue 68

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Happy new year to all our members. We hope you will enjoy watching progress at the Hall throughout the year and continue to support us in our fundraising efforts. We are all looking forward to seeing the snowdrops and the newly-planted 'Paradise garden' come into bloom and even to seeing some scaffolding springing up for the renovation work on the Hall.

It is a pleasure to visit the Hall through the changing seasons. At this time of year the view from the Mount is not obscured by leaves on the trees and Curtains pond is clearly visible. The first snowdrops are pushing through and soon they will carpet the woodland. The Hellebores are in full bloom, I even spotted a lonely Iris by the wall and some of the fungi are amazing.

Kath Smith



Stormy weather

In the autumn the wind and rain took its toll on the Hall and grounds. Three diseased Horse chestnut trees had to be felled after a huge branch was blown down, causing damage to the Privy. Fortunately the damage was not as severe as it could have been but the park did have to close to the public on some days for safety.



Unearthing the past



Just before Christmas, in all that wet weather, 14 volunteers participated in a community archaeological excavation in the Courtyard. This was undertaken by the University of Salford Centre for Applied Archaeology and supervised by Rachael Reader. They were looking for evidence of earlier buildings on the site – the Jacobean Hall and the Benedictine Priory. They found lots of oyster shells and 19th century pottery sherds, but the most exciting find was a late Cistercian ware double handled cup from the 16th or early 17th century. A full technical report is being prepared and further exploration is to take place later this year.

You may have seen the report on the finding of two Roman coins in the garden at the Hall. These were discovered by two of the volunteers as they were gardening. The tiny coins, known as 'radiates', date from the reign of Emperor Gallienus [253-268], making them more than 1,750 years old.

It is thought they may have been part of a collection of ancient artefacts at the Hall and could have been dropped by children playing with them in the garden.

Christmas decorations and an evening of Christmas Cheer.

The Friends' volunteers spent an enjoyable morning decorating the Dining room and stairway at the Hall for Christmas. We also decorated the upper west wing for the evening of Christmas Cheer. This event was well attended with 80 guests enjoying drinks and canapes in the dining room, followed by a sumptuous festive meal served by Paul Rowley and his staff.



The entertainment by Billy, Annie, Ann and Trevor was again the highlight of the evening. Trevor played a very lively fiddle and Billy made us all laugh with his little anecdotes. Ann made a wonderful page in Good King Wenceslas and Annie kept them all going with her wonderful musical accompaniment.

With the superb support of the guests who gave generously to the raffle [and supported the bar] we raised £1,200. It was a lovely start to the festive season and made the Hall come to life, and we look forward to the start of renovation works in 2016.

Meg Hargreaves

News from the Hall

The New Year at Lytham Hall has started with a bang...and a flood! The driveway was flooded between Christmas and New Year, which meant we could not open as planned on New Year's Day. But what a surprise there was when we did open to the public!

Newly appointed employees at Lytham Hall, Paul Lomax and Peter Anthony have created a transformation of the tea room, with the help of Lytham Hall volunteers - new paint, new wallpaper, new menu, new seating and the results are stunning. Without any publicity, other than social media (an official launch is planned in February), the first weeks of January have been busier than we could have imagined. And the responses from visitors are positive indeed.



Eddie and Jo James were daily visitors as they moved the Friends' bookshop into the West Wing lobby, as part of plans to close the courtyard ahead of the external restoration contractor starting. Subject to approval from our main funders, we expect the work to start in April 2016.

The weekly parkrun on Saturday mornings is getting more popular by the week. These runners are hardy souls, and consider the copious amounts of mud as part of the fun. It is a 5K run, and you don't run to win, but you run to improve on your time. As the Nordic walking groups are coming more often too, this all puts Lytham Hall's parkland on the map as a prime place for the local health agenda.

In December we welcomed news from the Coastal Communities Revival Fund of an award of £47,000. This will be spent on creating a joinery workshop in the stable yard, and the external restoration work. We are waiting to hear if we have been selected as one of Tesco's community projects, to create a kitchen garden: if so, we will need lots of Tesco customer votes to win!

The new volunteer coordinator is expected to be appointed before the end of the month, which means the team will be back to full strength. Happily, the volunteers have kept on coming, and we currently have around 120 active volunteers on the books. We have been able to offer some training and thanks to the support of the Friends, are now able to buy some much needed museum conservation tools for the collection in the Hall.

We're just putting the final touches on the Events leaflet for the year, which of course starts with snowdrops. Given that we are now open Saturdays too, we need even more volunteers to man the gates during the snowdrop season. If you'd like to lend a hand – when you're not busy in the snowdrop shop – please let me know.

We are lucky enough to be chosen as the place where the Capability Brown Festival in the northwest will be launched on 16 March, with a day of lectures and tours, so look out for further details and booking form. Thank you for your continued support and let me know if you have any queries.

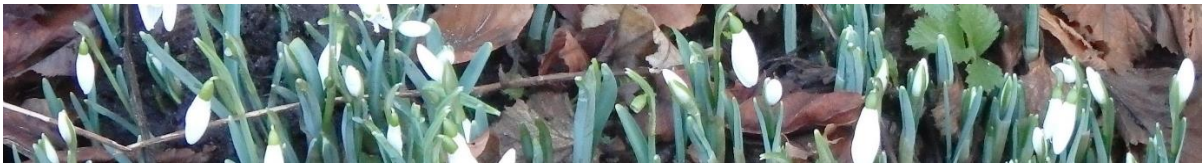
Marianne Blaauboer

Activity Plan Officer, Lytham Hall



Bookshop

The Friends' second-hand bookshop has been moved to the room opposite the tearoom. There are lots of new books and there is more space, making browsing easier, so don't forget to drop in on your next visit to the Hall. There is an honesty box for payments.



Snowdrop Days

The snowdrops are peeping through and Lytham Hall parkland and tea room will be opening every Sunday from 31st January to 6th March inclusive from 10am-4pm, and Saturdays from the 13th February to 5th March from 11am-4pm, for everyone to enjoy them appearing in their thousands across the grounds.

***No cars** are allowed on these days - the grounds are just for walkers to explore and appreciate the impressive displays. With all the bad weather, the verges along the drive are incredibly muddy and we want walkers to be able to use the full extent of the driveway without having to step into the mud at every passing car.*

Please park in the car park on Ballam Road. Blue badge holders can drive up, of course.

Price for grounds entry is £3 for adults and free for children this year.

The income from the snowdrop fundraising season is instrumental for the survival of Lytham Hall, which relies on visitor spending and volunteer help as there is no regular funding from Town or County.

The Friends will be running a shop where you can buy snowdrops and other items, or maybe have a go on our tombola. Volunteers are always needed to help run the shop. If you could spare a few hours to help out, contact Sue on 01253 735513.

Photography and Art Competition

Volunteer Megan is organising a special under-18 snowdrop photography and art competition.

The deadline is 22 February to send digital images to lythamhallsnowdrops@gmail.com or art work to Lytham Hall, Ballam Road, Lytham FY8 4JX. Megan has been able to secure some wonderful prizes from local businesses, so it's worth having a go.

Photo submissions should be in digital format as jpegs.

All entries for both art and photography should include the following: Name and age, address and contact number, email address and confirmation that you allow Lytham Hall to publish your image online and in print.

Civic Society & Friends of Lytham Hall Festive Coffee Morning



Members of the Lytham St Annes Civic Society and the Friends of Lytham Hall enjoyed a pre-Christmas coffee morning at the Hall in December. This event, usually held in the entrance hall, took place in the dining room as the fireplace in the entrance hall is out of use. The Christmas tree and table decorated by the Friends gave the room a festive feel and the morning was well-attended.

The North Entrance

You may have noticed the new paintwork on the stonework at the North entrance to the Hall. We are used to seeing the stonework painted white but, on investigation it was found that the original paint was this ochre colour. The stone has always been painted.



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