

Friends of Lytham Hall

Newsletter

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www.lythamhall.org

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Issue 49

“Happy New Year”



This splendid photo opportunity came as a result of the National Association of Flower Arrangement Societies event that, in association with Lytham Hall, presented a spectacular show of blooms and table displays that captured the seasonal spirit during early December.

Lambert Dopping Chairman of the Friends writes:

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2010.

We have had another busy year starting with the popular Snowdrop Walks. We sold Trail Quizzes, which provided some insight into the features of the grounds around the Hall, and we also set up a stall and display in the shop. These raised over £500 and also kept some of the children amused while their parents enjoyed the snowdrops!

Visit the Friends Website on: www.lythamhall.org

We brought back the Summer Lunch and even a short shower didn't deter our ardent supporters. In September we unveiled the restored Bell-cote with a kind donation from Jean Wilding-Walsh. At the end of October we held an Autumn Fayre in the Lytham Assembly Rooms and in December our annual Evening of Christmas Cheer at the Hall was again a sell-out.

Our fund raising contributed to a replacement footbridge over the stream at the end of the front lawn, to work starting on restoring the Privy and for a well attended lecture by Niall Phillips, the Hall's architect, on the plans for the restoration to be funded by the Lottery Bid.



The new footbridge

We also did some hard work clearing out the Pigsty and removed tons of earth and undergrowth covering its cobbled yard.

This year our aim is to support one of the Lottery Bid projects and we will bring you more details in future Newsletters. Our first events of the year will again be snowdrop walks at the Hall, a very pleasant way to spend a Sunday. This year we will be selling snowdrops as well as trail quizzes; any help

with this would be much appreciated – please contact a member of the committee.



The Victorian Two-Seated Privy

We will advise you of other Friends events for the year in our next Newsletter. If you are able to receive this Newsletter by e-mail please let us know so that we can keep costs down and make best use of membership fees in supporting the Hall.

I look forward to seeing you at the Hall.

Forthcoming events:

Snowdrops Walks

The Hall will once again be hosting the ever popular Snowdrop walks, the first day being Sunday 7th February continuing through until to Sunday 7th March.

Parking in the grounds will be limited to disabled drivers only. All other vehicles can be parked for free in the Aegon Insurance car park adjacent to the Main Gates on Ballam road. Benches will be dotted along the driveway to allow respite. Stout shoes are recommended and dogs, although welcome, must be kept on a leash.

Entrance to the grounds will start at 10:30am with last entry at 3:00pm. The costs are: £2.50 for Adults, £1 for Children. The tea-room will also be open for light refreshments.

Further information can be obtained from Lytham Hall Office, Ballam Road, Lytham FY8 4JX Tel. No. 01253 736652 or e-mail lytham.hall@htnw.co.uk

Recent Events

Evening of Xmas Cheer – 5th December

Many, many thanks to those that came along to the evening of Christmas Cheer, and apologies to all those who wanted tickets but couldn't get them due to the high demand. The evening once again turned into a really special event. Guests enjoyed aperitifs and canapés in the entrance hall with a group of young musicians providing a selection of Christmas and other music, before another excellent meal supplied by Rowleys catering. After the meal Billy Charles and a talented group of friends entertained us with their singing and lively humor before leading the carols. The evening again raised over £1000.



The Hall was beautifully decorated at Christmas

Autumn Fair - 31st October.

A big effort by the Committee ensured another successful Autumn Fair. From cakes to Bric-a-brac, Plants to tombola, everyone worked really hard to make it a success. Of special interest was the exhibition of photography presented by Sandy Dopping.

Thanks go to everyone who turned up to support the event plus volunteers Ann Molodynski, Ann Pollitt, Beryl Hayes, Rita Midgley & Jean Wilding –Walsh.

The Lytham Hall Bell-cote by Michael Boddy

The sound of an historic bell rang out across the grounds of Lytham Hall for the first time

in more than half a century on Sunday 6th September.

The bell, an important piece of Clifton family history, which dates back for centuries, has been lovingly restored to its former glory.



The Bell-cote dedication

The Clifton family were staunch Roman Catholics, and the bell was used to call the hall's workers to prayer.

The restoration was made possible through a financial contribution from a member of the Friends of Lytham Hall, Jean Wilding-Walsh, in memory of her late husband, Eddie Walsh.

The bell was dedicated by the Rev William Riley, Deacon of St Peter's RC Church, Lytham, in a special ceremony watched by friends, family and supporters of the hall.

Mrs Wilding-Walsh, aged 88, of Central Beach, Lytham, said, "My husband was very well known in the town through all the local causes that he supported "He was a man of standing, described by a lot of people as the perfect gentleman. As someone who had a

great deal of fondness for Lytham Hall, I thought this would be a very fitting tribute".

Mr Walsh was an active member of the St Peter's congregation. He also did voluntary work for Lytham Club Day, the Ratepayers' Association, and other local groups.

He had worked as a factory manager for the Metal Box Company - a job which took him as far afield as Nigeria.

His first marriage was to Alice Etherington, a Blackpool teacher, by whom he had two daughters, Sheila and Eileen.

He acted as consort to Jean, a retired journalist, during her Mayoralty of Fylde in 1993/94, accompanying her on many of her civic engagements.

Mr Walsh died in 2006, aged 95.

George Blackburn

It is with deep regret that we report the death of one of the Friends staunchest supporters. George Blackburn passed away 27th November following a period of bad health. He leaves his wife Paddy, their three children and four Grand-children.

George along with Paddy has for many years organised the small band of Posties who deliver this Newsletter. He is remembered by the Friends for his kind and gentle ways plus and unfailing sense of humour. He will be missed.

The archaeology of the Lytham Hall gardens, by Nigel R J Neil

During the Heritage Open Days on 12-13th September, and on the 17th-18th November for the Heritage Skills Workshops, a team of up to a dozen volunteers have undertaken trial archaeological excavations south of Lytham Hall and east of the 'Monks' Wall'. Nigel Neil, a professional freelance archaeologist from Lancaster, has been appointed by The Heritage Trust for the North West **with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund** to

carry out some exploratory excavations with a view to securing additional funds at a later date from the HLF to carry out further excavations.



Current map with transparent overlay of 1844 and 1812 map overlay to show 3 probable greenhouses, demolished before 1844

Work has been done to locate a Victorian pathway east of the doorway to the privy, and on one of three huge 26 x 7m (85 x 23 ft) lost buildings which were in existence in 1812. These were almost certainly low, partly-glazed, cold-frames, for propagating a range of fruits and vegetables, and this area would have been termed a 'Frame Yard'. In the 1830s or '40s the frames were demolished, and the area became a pleasure garden. Many of the volunteers also acted as 'ambassadors' for HTNW, by helping visiting members of the public to appreciate the purpose of the work. A member of the Pendle Heritage Centre Archaeology Group came over from Barrowford on 17th Nov to lend his skills. Over 20 people have expressed an interest in becoming archaeology volunteers in 2010.

Although we may return to do further work on the Frameryard, the Trust is actively making plans for archaeological excavation during 2010 on the late sixteenth or seventeenth-century Mount ('viewing mound') at the south end of the Monk's Wall, an integral part of any Restoration period garden. This will be the main focus for the archaeology team's work in 2010, commencing in March or April. Whilst only limited funds are available at present, in

addition to putting trial trenches across the spiral access path, and the sites of steps at the base, a main concern will be the icehouse that was built into it sometime between about 1820 and 1840.



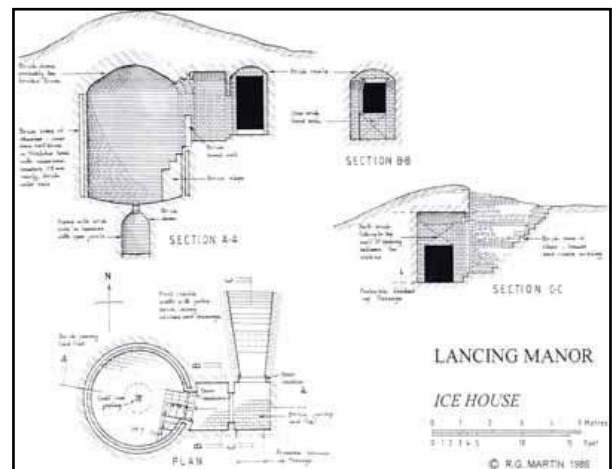
Example of partly glazed Cold Frames, this one with cucumbers. Heligan Gardens, Cornwall

Icehouses, or at least their access passages, were sometimes used as stores for vegetables, and the ice itself had numerous horticultural and culinary uses. At Lytham, the icehouse was probably filled (in winters when sufficient ice formed) from the adjacent Curtains Pond, but ice was also shipped from Canada, the USA, and Norway to Liverpool and other UK ports. Although there are still several hundred icehouses around Britain, very few can be visited. Research suggests that the Lytham icehouse is unique in Britain in being built into an earlier viewing mound.

The Trust commissioned a detailed topographical survey of the Mount, which is about 75 metres in diameter, and over 10 metres high, excluding the water-filled ditch. By the time you read this, discussions will have been held to arrange for some of the

dense undergrowth, and a few of the seeded trees, on the Mount to be cleared. Nigel has already confirmed that a fragment of brickwork, probably in the entrance tunnel of the icehouse, was revealed by the unrecorded Guardian Royal Exchange trench in the 1980s, and this provides an excellent starting point for the 2010 work. Piles of much earlier (seventeenth-century) brickwork seem to have been dumped when the Monks' Wall was repaired around the same time.

Typical Ice-house - Lancing Manor West Sussex



The aim of the excavations will be to reveal the full circumference of the internal wall of the icehouse (which probably went out of use and collapsed in the late 1800s) and consider ways that the Mount and icehouse could be conserved and/or restored for public display, as part of the HLF bid. Reports from the 1960s suggest that the Lytham icehouse was a rare timber-roofed example, rather than one of the more common brick-vaulted types. One at Read Hall near Accrington was excavated in the 1960s, and that at Levens Hall, Cumbria, was experimentally re-filled with ice in 1980 – it held 17 tons of ice, some of which remained frozen for 13 months. One at Tong in Shropshire was excavated, dismantled, and re-built at the Avoncroft Museum of Buildings, to save it from being destroyed by the M54 motorway.

Events at the Hall

Lytham Hall is still finalising their programme of events for 2010. Below is a list of events for the first half of the year. Further information can be obtained by phoning the Hall, or from its website.

Afternoon Tea & Flower Demonstrations – 20 Jan, 4th Feb & 25th March.
Afternoon Tea & Flower Demonstration by **Jane**. Price £20.00 per person.

Mothering Sunday - 14 March
A 3 course traditional lunch with coffee and mints Price £25 - Advanced booking required

Family Fun day Easter Sunday - 4th April
Easter Bonnet competition, Easter Egg Hunt.
12.30pm to 4.30pm, gates close at 3.30pm.

The *Friends* are organising an exciting Easter Bunny Hunt to search for the Bunnies and win a cream egg. You could wear your Easter Bonnet to win an extra treat. £1.50 for adults and £1 for children.

The House is open for conducted Tour starting at 2pm. Adults £4 & Children £2

Open Days: Easter to 31st October 2010

There is free entry to the Grounds every Tues, Wed & Thurs until the end of October.

Sundays and Bank Holidays there will be a small charge of £1 Adults/50p Children.

Times: 12.30pm - 4.30pm, (last entry 3.30pm)

The House is open every Sunday for a Conducted Tour starting at 2pm. Adults £4, Children £2, except on the last Sunday of every month and Bank Holidays when the House will be open to the public from 1.30 pm - 4.30pm. Adults £2.50, Children £1

Tea Room open every Sunday and Bank Holiday.

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