

# Friends of Lytham Hall

## Newsletter

Registered Charity No: 1069442

Feb 2007

Issue 42

A Happy New Year to all Friends of Lytham Hall and welcome to the first newsletter of 2007.

This year is should see more development at the Hall especially with the two major ongoing large-scale developments. The first of which is the upgrade of facilities to allow the Hall to more effectively generate income. The West wing has received the majority of this work over the past couple of years and is now in a position to seriously offer itself to all kinds of events. We wish HTNW well with this strategy and urge all Friends to do all they can to network the Hall and its facilities to anyone and any organisation they may have influence with.

The second, turning the grounds into a Country Park, is still ongoing. We hope to bring an update on this in the next edition of the newsletter.

The Friends support the HTNW on both the above initiatives. Our own aspirations for 2007 are to support the Hall with all its events and major projects; to continue to raise funds; and to facilitate the renovation of the bell in the rear courtyard and the two-seater privy.

### **Snowdrops Walks**

As we go to print the Snowdrop walks have already started at Lytham Hall, the first day being Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> Jan. and will continue through until to Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> Feb.

Parking in the grounds will be limited to disabled drivers only. All other vehicles can be parked 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 3:30pm. 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](mailto:lytham.hall@htnw.co.uk)

Volunteers are needed to help out in the tea-room. If anyone is willing to make themselves available for 2 hours or so on any of the Sundays, please ring the office on 736652.

### ***Recent Events***

#### **Evening of Christmas Cheer**

The Friends of Lytham Hall held their annual Evening of Christmas Cheer at the Hall on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2006. This is proving a very popular event and once again it was a sell out.

We were very lucky this year in that there was a wedding the following day and we were able to take advantage of the covering that had been put over the rear courtyard complete with its own sky at night!

The Friends had made a lovely job of decorating the Hall and it all looked very festive.

The evening commenced with a reception in the main Hall at 7 pm with drinks and canapés, followed by a 4 course meal served in the West Wing by Rowleys catering. The evening was drawn to a close by the usual carol singing led this year by Peter Jebson who was extremely entertaining and we would like to thank him for giving of his time.

We had a Christmas raffle for a marvellous hamper and we also held an auction for a Tom Eccles signed limited edition print of the Hall which he had kindly donated to us and which raised £170.00 for the Friends funds.

The evening was a great success and raised approx £1300.00. We hope to hold a similar event on Friday 7th December 2007, if you would like join us on the night please contact a member of the committee. This event is not to be confused with the Christmas Dinner offered by the Hall on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> December.

### ***Dates for your Diaries***

**Summer Lunch at the Hall** – Sun. 15th July.  
Details to follow

**Annual General Meeting** – Tues. 18th Sept.  
The *Friends of Lytham Hall* AGM will be held at the Assembly rooms Lytham.

**Xmas Fair** – Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> November.  
Assembly Rooms Lytham.

**Evening of Xmas Cheer** – Fri. 7<sup>th</sup> December  
Make a date in your diary for this most popular event.

### ***Memories of the Hall***

#### **Louis Monnier and Lytham Hall**

By his daughter Valerie Kilburn

My father Louis Monnier was born in 1912 in London, but of French parents. His father registered him as a French citizen even though he was to spend little time living in France. He was, however, bi lingual.

In 1937 he began working for Mr Harold de Vere Clifton as a chauffeur at Lytham Hall. As a child I used to enjoy the tales my father told me of his experiences working for “Mr Clifton” as he always referred to him.

The earliest record I have is a Daily Express newspaper cutting dated Tuesday March 1<sup>st</sup> 1938 headline “Squire’s bride is home – an invalid” There is a photo of Mrs Henry Talbot de Vere Clifton arriving in an invalid chair at Lytham Station. My father dressed in his chauffeur’s uniform is meeting her. She is wrapped in furs and taken to Lytham Hall on her first visit to the ancestral home since she

married the 29 year old world wandering squire. According to the newspaper Lytham had been waiting three months to welcome the squire’s wife. She should have come to the hall with her husband for Christmas, but she travelled alone in the Europa. While on her way to see a London specialist she was taken ill suddenly and had been in bed since December suffering from a breakdown. She went to bed as soon as she reached the hall. A member of staff said there was no truth in the report in an American newspaper that Mrs Clifton had come to England following differences with the squire. Apparently the squire had been in America since his marriage writing plays.

A second cutting I have is headed “Wife waits for squire in £30,000 poker suit.” Mr Clifton had lost £30,000 in a poker game. In the lawsuit which followed the judge had a dramatic reconstruction of the poker game staged but the case was eventually settled out of court. When this news reached England Lytham Hall was under siege from reporters, so Mrs Clifton who had not seen her husband for six months organised a civilian guard to be place around the fourteen mile boundary of the hall and nobody could enter without a permit. She had denied she was returning to America. Instead she learned by transatlantic telephone call that he was coming home and she was preparing a welcome.

Louis got on very well with Mrs Clifton and she used to call him Lewis. I have a photo of her in riding gear and also one of her daughter on a horse.

In July 1938 my father was to visit to Kidalton Castle on the Isle of Islay, part of the Clifton estate. I have a number of snapshots of the trip and castle. The lady’s maid, Lydia, features in some of them.

On September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1938 I have a letter signed by Lillian Lowell Clifton saying she wished to take my father to the USA in order to drive her car. The same day a request for a USA visa for my father was made by William

Whinnerah, the land agent. Both letters were stamped by the American Consulate in Liverpool on Sept 6<sup>th</sup>. I also have my father's New York chauffeur's licence granted in September 1938. and Lillian Lowell Griswold's car registration licence dated February 11<sup>th</sup> 1937, showing she owned a 1936 Bentley Rolls Royce. I am not sure whether this was the Bentley my father used to drive in England. I have snaps of a Bentley being hoisted on board a ship. This Bentley, registration Number DLF 734, I believe is still in existence and used for weddings.

They sailed to USA on the SS Normandie, a very grand liner. There are a number of snaps of New York and Boston. In December 1938 my father received an extension of his visa till January 11<sup>th</sup>. Then I presume he returned on the SS Brenham.

As I mentioned Louis was registered as a French citizen, so in 1932 he received call up papers to do French Military Service. These he ignored as he considered himself English and held a British passport. Therefore he was a "Wanted Man" in France. I am not sure exactly when, but he had driven Mr Clifton down to Monte Carlo. While there he was tipped off that the police were looking for him. Obviously his passport showed his name which couldn't have been more French! He immediately explained the situation to Mr Clifton, who kindly released him and advised him to get across the border to Belgium as soon as possible and sail home from a Belgian port. My father always used to relate the story of how frightened he was travelling on the train to get to Belgium.

When war was declared on September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1939 Louis left Lytham immediately to sign up for war service. He used to describe the car journey down to his mother in London in his little Morris car with no headlights as there was an immediate blackout.

On October 9<sup>th</sup> 1939 Mr Clifton wrote a short testimonial for Louis. "L. Monnier is a very good driver, excellent servant; no drink. He

left to go to London on the outbreak of war for National Service. Yours faithfully H. Clifton". The land agent sent this testimonial along with "Twenty pounds in Bank of England notes" to my father in London.

Louis didn't join up straight away but became a London Ambulance driver. After he married in December 1939 he joined the RAF as an engine fitter. After the war he spent his whole working life in the motor cycle trade. When I was a child we always had a car even immediately after the war ended.

What a lovely story. Many thanks Valerie. Please keep sending in your own **Memories of the Hall**, whether they are personal stories about Lytham Hall or about one of its inhabitants; it all helps to piece together what life was like when the Hall was a lived in property.

Alternatively, if you know someone else that you know had some association with the Hall, please ask them to get in touch - or write in on their behalf. A phone call (728186) or something written down on paper would be appreciated.

### *Lytham Hall*

#### **Events at the Hall 2007**

#### **Snowdrop Sundays**

- Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> January
- Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> February
- Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> February
- Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> February

Admission at gatehouses £2.50 / £1 from 10.30am - 3pm.

#### **Sunday Walks at the Hall**

- Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> March - Catch a glimpse of the Daffodils.
- Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> April - Bluebells and Rhododendrons.
- Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> May - Bluebells and Rhododendrons.
- Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> October - See the colours of Autumn.

Admission at gatehouse £1 Adults, 50p Children. Parking on site (£1). Tours of the Hall will be available.

Tea room open for light refreshments

For the first time a 3 course carvery is available (booking advisable), please contact 01253 721534.

### **Other Open Days**

- Monday, 9th April
- Sunday, 3rd June
- Wednesday, 6th June
- Wednesday, 18th July
- Wednesday, 25th July
- Wednesday, 1st August

Grounds 10.30am - 4pm (last entry 3pm).

Admission at gatehouse £1 Adults, 50p Children. Parking on site (£1). Tours of the Hall will be available. Tea room open for light refreshments

### **Outdoor Theatre by Illyria**

- 'Much Ado about Nothing' Sunday, 8th July
- 'Robin Hood' Tuesday, 7th August (family show)
- 'Hound of Baskervilles' Sunday, 19th August

Gates open at 5pm - free parking. Tickets from Lowther Box Office Tel: 01253 658666. £12 Adults, £7 Children.

Gates open 1 hour before.

Seating is not provided so bring your own low-backed chair/rug, a picnic and insect repellent! Light refreshments are available. Cancellation in the event of hurricane only! Tickets non-refundable.

### **Heritage Open Day**

Saturday, 8th & Sunday, 9th September. Free Admission to Hall and grounds.

Parking on site (£1). Tea room open for light refreshments.

### **Lytham Hall - The War Years**

Thursday, 25th October at 7.30pm - An Illustrated Talk by local historian Ann Pinder.

Tickets £6.50 including glass of wine and canapés.

### **Christmas Lunches**

- Tuesday, 11th December
- Wednesday, 12th December
- Thursday, 13th December

Mulled wine on arrival with a 3 course traditional Christmas lunch with coffee and mince pies. £20 per person.

Advance booking required (large groups welcome). Arrival at 12.00pm / lunch served at 12.45pm

### ***Who said that!***

Continuing with our series of articles that attempt to explain where unusual sayings originated:

### ***Worth their salt.***

If someone is good at his or her job; reliable; trustworthy then they are said to be worth their salt. This goes back to the days when salt was an expensive and valued commodity; Roman soldiers were actually partly paid in salt and this money was known as *salarium* from the Latin *sal*, salt. From this origin comes our word *Salary*.

### ***Get the sack***

In the old days workers carried their own tools in a sack. This was deposited with their employer in order to look after the tools. When the worker was no longer needed or was dismissed he was given the sack back.

### ***Contacts:***

*Liz Guffogg*, Chairman: (01253) 727696

*Kath Smith*, Secretary: (01253) 737548

*Zoe Rushworth*, Treasurer: (01253) 731538

*John Martin*, Newsletter: (01253) 728186

*Pauline Hamilton*, Membership:  
(01253) 736857

*Marion Coupe*, Events: (01253) 733563

*Fiona Mackay*, Hall Bookings: (01253) 736652

# Friends of Lytham Hall

## Newsletter

Registered Charity No: 1069442

Feb 2007

Issue 42