

# Friends of Lytham Hall

## Newsletter

Registered Charity No: 1069442

May 2005

Issue 35

### ***Forthcoming Events:***

#### **Midsummer Pimms Party – Sun 3<sup>rd</sup> July**

The *Friends* have been lucky enough to again be invited to lunch at Green Close, 1 Laurel Avenue, Lytham, at the lovely home of committee member Marilyn Smith. Laurel Avenue is just off Ballam Rd almost opposite Green Drive Golf Club. The event this year will feature a Pimms Party and will take place on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July June starting 12:00pm and will cost £10 per person.

The party lunch will be a delicious cold buffet followed by irresistible desserts. There will be a licensed bar although the day's speciality will be Pimms.

Tickets, are now available for this event and can be purchased by sending in the application form at the back of this newsletter together with a stamped address envelope or by contacting Meg Hargreaves on (01253) 733098).

### ***Recent Events***

#### **Snowdrop Sundays**

The snowdrops were as good as ever this year with over 2,700 people passing through the gates. Also, just as last year one of the Sundays had to be cancelled at the last minute due to a violent gale.

Thanks go to the volunteers who helped out in the tea-room, and other duties.

#### **Cazanova & Lytham Hall**

Not sure if anyone saw the episode on BBC1 on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May. It featured Casanova renting a London Town House on a short lease. Whilst showing it off to a friend the rooms looked familiar, but when Cuthbert Clifton appeared in the background it became obvious that it was Lytham Hall. Even close ups of the exterior were used.

We knew that some filming had taken place there last year but had no idea what it was being used for and when it was to be shown.

Full marks to Kath Smith who first spotted the Hall when the drama was initially shown on BBC3. Towneley Hall was another Lancashire venue also used in the series

#### **Return of John Talbot's Billiard table**

John Talbot Clifton, a keen billiards player, died in 1928. The story goes that Harry hated the game and was rebuked by his father for not playing well.

By 1933 Harry had got control of his inheritance and began to dissipate it. One of the first things to go was the billiard table from the Hall. He offered it to the Conservative Club if they would remove it immediately and they apparently arranged to move it quickly. There it has stayed, with a plaque saying:

"Presented to the Lytham Conservative Club  
By the President,  
Henry T. de Vere Clifton; Esq.,  
December 1933"

We learned from Marcus and Catherine Hilton that the Club, which is now re-named The Hastings Club was about to undergo a major re-furbishment and that they no longer needed the table. They would be willing to return it to the Hall if the costs of removal were met.

The conditions were spookily similar to those used by Harry Clifton i.e. if you want it come and get it, but quickly! John Miller of HTNW confirmed that its return would be welcome. The Friends offered and subsequently paid the moving costs of £400, and, before we knew it the 5 piece slate bed table was back in the room it had left in such a hurry over 75 years ago. The table has been converted to snooker, and the score board etc is not the original. However, it sits in the room which clearly was purpose built to house it, and looks good. We have photographs taken in the 1920's showing it then in situ and intend to display these near it.

The haste on the part of the Hastings club is a result of the modernisation process currently underway within the club. It is to their credit that the offer was made as they could have easily sold the table on the open market. This is a fine reminder of a local organisation being aware of its social responsibilities and placing it before simple profit.

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

**Annual General Meeting** – 21st September  
The Friends of Lytham Hall AGM will be held at the Assembly rooms Lytham on Wed. 21st September 2005 at 7:30pm.

**Xmas Fair** – Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November.  
Assembly rooms Lytham. 10.00-12.00pm.  
Please make a note of this date and call in for a coffee. All donations of raffle and tombola prizes, home baking etc are welcome. There will be a great plant stall as usual. Its a good way to help us help the Hall

**Evening of Xmas Cheer** – 9<sup>th</sup> Dec  
After the success of last year's event, probably the best yet, we are delighted to announce another booking at Lytham Hall for this year's "Evening of Christmas Cheer" on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December. Details of the ticket sales will appear in the next Newsletter but we will be urging people to book early to avoid being disappointed.

### **LYTHAM HALL.**

John Carr of York - the architect of Lytham Hall, by Marion Coupe. Part 1 of 2

John Carr was a man held in great esteem by his contemporaries - but whose reputation has declined with the years. Oddly, this has been largely due to the lack of a good published biography. Others, such as Sir Christopher Wren, Nicholas Hawksmoor, Inigo Jones and Sir William Chambers are known to us and information about their work has been easily accessible. Besides this, they are better known for working in London. Carr is always called "of York" - as if there were lots more architects of the same name we might confuse him with! This situation has been

rectified by the publication in 2000 of the long awaited biography of Carr researched by Brian Wragg and edited by Giles Worsley.

John Carr was born in 1723 at Horbury near Wakefield into a family of masons who owned two quarries. His tale is not one of "rags to riches", although he did die a wealthy man. His family were fairly well to do and highly skilled in building matters, but John rose up the social scale in calling himself an architect. It is thought that most of his technical knowledge came from his father Robert from an early age. Indeed his training was completely practical, and he learned more from each commission he was involved in. He married Sarah, a domestic servant at Bretton Hall, but they had no children. She does not seem to figure in his life a great deal, rarely mentioned, and seemingly not accompanying him to social events in York.

The first house which John Carr is thought to have designed, at the age of twenty five, was at Huthwaite Hall in Yorkshire. It is five bays wide, symmetrical with a gabled roof, its proportions typically early Georgian. An interesting characteristic of the house, and one which is used in later buildings, is the re-use of parts of the old house as kitchens and servants quarters. This we see at Lytham Hall. The same year, 1748, marked the beginning of a wave of new country house building all over the country. This was in part due to the cessation of hostilities at the end of the War of the Austrian Succession, and the end of the Jacobite threat to the Hanoverian monarchy after Culloden in 1745.

He moved to York in about 1751, the leading social centre of the North of England where he would pick up more valuable commissions. On his arrival however he still referred to himself as a "stonecutter" and specialised in chimney pieces. He took on jobs small and large for the city, including repairs to the Assembly Rooms. Carr went on to achieve commissions from influential patrons, designing interiors, supervising building works and increasing his design

knowledge. In the mid 1750's he was seen as Yorkshire's young up and coming architect. There were many other craftsmen around in York, woodworkers, Italian plaster workers, iron and lead workers, all eager to profit from the boom in gentry house building.

Carr was a busy man, taking on jobs large and small. In 1752 -3 he joined his father in the execution of a survey of the bridges of the West Riding. Thirty seven of the plates in the volume produced are beautifully drawn by Carr himself. He had soon established a good practice designing town houses in York. By the 1760's these were grand houses with sumptuous interiors such as Castlegate House(1762) and Fairfax House(1761-5). His grand staircases were a contrast to the smaller 17th century style, with huge Venetian windows to light them, as at Lytham Hall.

A turning point in his career was a commission to construct a new grandstand for York Races. It was a great success and the fact that there were over 140 subscribers to the project, led by Lord Rockingham, brought him to the attention of many more of the gentry. It was the design and supervision of Harewood house and stables for the Lascelles family which built his reputation as a country house architect. Much of the interior design was by Robert Adam but supervised by Carr. In later commissions Carr's interiors were sometimes mistaken for those of Adam.

Besides creating designs which were fashionable and desirable, it was the job of the architect to source materials, organise labour, and keep accounts. Carr was meticulous in his account keeping and soon became a rich and prominent member of the York community. He became an alderman of the city, and Lord Mayor in 1770 and 1785. In 1770 Carr prepared a report on the state of York Minster which seemed in dire condition "This is an exceeding bad roof, and has been very injudiciously repaired", he wrote.

John Carr, trained as a surveyor, was an astute

and successful business man. His greatness lies in the way he embraced the graceful proportions and detailing of classical architecture, thereby creating some of the most significant buildings in the northern half of the country.

### **Old Kitchen Chimney**

As mentioned in previous newsletters the plans have been passed to allow the restoration of the chimney in the old kitchen. We are pleased to announce that, thanks to a very generous donation by one of our members, we are now in a position to fund the entire rebuilding costs including the finished chimney entrance.

The old kitchen at Lytham Hall is part of the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> house and originally had a huge hearth which would have consumed wood and peat. Later a cast iron Victorian range would have been installed, but now there is only a very uninteresting space in the chimney area. HTNW have decided to restore the whole chimney so that a real fire can be lit once again thus making the room more cosy and welcoming. This work will begin in June. It has not been easy to decide what sort of open hearth to create as the room has undergone so many changes in its existence (perhaps even the monks warmed their toes!). However, the new grate is being made by Trapp Forge who renovated the main entrance gates and we look forward to seeing it.

### **Membership**

The end of the membership year expires on 31st May.

Membership renewals forms are attached to the rear of this newsletter. Those that pay by standing order have been notified separately so as to allow them to change their standing orders to reflect the new rate of £8. However, we are still urging anyone who does manage to read the newsletter on a regular basis to join the Friends in their worthy cause.

It was decided at the last AGM that membership fees should rise so as to offset the very high increases in the premiums charged for public liabilities insurance required by the Friends when staging functions and events. The increased rates are the first rise since they were introduced in 1997. We believe they still represent value for money and will increase our ability to support the Hall for the challenging times ahead. The new rates are £8 per year for Adults and £12 per year for couples. The cost for Patrons remains at £50.

All enquiries concerning membership should be directed to the membership secretary, Mrs Pauline Hamilton, Tel. (01253) 736857

**Who said that!**

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

**A Baker's Dozen**

In the Middle Ages in England there were severe penalties for anyone who gave short weight. To guard against miscounting bakers habitually gave thirteen loaves when selling a dozen.

**A Cock & Bull story.**

It is widely reported that the phrase originated at Stony Stratford in Buckinghamshire. Coaches between London and Birmingham changed horses in the town at two of the main coach houses - the Cock and the Bull. The banter of the rival groups of travellers, from England's two largest cities, resulted in exaggerated and fanciful stories.

**Email!**

Could you receive your Newsletters and other *Friends* literature via email? If you could it would cut down printing and delivery costs and makes distribution a lot easier and quicker. If you are interested in receiving your Friends correspondence by this method, please send your email address to 'info@lythamhall.org' stating your name and address and whether you prefer documentation in Microsoft Word or HTML.

**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
- Ann Pinder*, Hall Bookings: (01253) 736652

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***I should like to attend the Summer Lunch on July 3rd at 1 Laurel Avenue, Lytham.***

***Name*** . . . . .

***Address*** . . . . .  
. . . . . ***Post Code*** . . . . . ***Telephone*** . . . . .

***Please send me \_\_ tickets at £10.00 each***

***I enclose my remittance of £ . . . . .***

***Cheques should be made payable to: The Friends of Lytham Hall.***

***Please return with remittance to:***

***Mrs Meg Hargreaves  
12, Riversleigh Avenue  
Lytham  
Lytham St Annes. FY8 5QZ***

***If any further information is required Meg can also be contacted on (01253) 733098***