

# Friends of Lytham Hall

## Newsletter

Registered Charity No: 1069442

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Issue 14

### *Clifton Collection*

This final newsletter of the year and indeed the millennium unfortunately contains no positive news about the Clifton Collection. We can only hope that all efforts to secure its long-term placement at the Hall have been made and that nothing has been left to chance or good luck.

It does seem odd though that in almost three years since Lytham Town Trust was entrusted with the Hall that no public appeal has taken place. No large scale fund-raising (apart from the failed lottery bid). We can only assume that that this eerie silence reflects the quiet confidence of the Town Trust in its ability to raise the required funds.

It is to be hoped that an announcement will be made shortly. Securing the future of the Collection would be a great ending to the year

### *Memories of the Hall*

We have heard from one of our oldest supporters, Mrs Sadie Hunt of Cartmell road St Annes. She is 92 and remembers working for the Red Cross at Lytham Hall during 1943. Originally from London Sadie particularly remembers working in the Kitchen, preparing tripe! She also remembers the Commandant was a Mrs Smith.

We would like to run a series of articles about the Hall in War-time, if you can contribute please write in.

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We have unearthed two sisters who worked at the Hall from 1934 and into the War years. Both Mrs Margaret Shenton and her sister Mrs Phyllis Coreless held the position of Lady's Maid to Lilian Clifton wife of Squire Harry Clifton.

They responded to a newspaper advertisement for staff at the Hall. After applying by letter (no interview required) the Hall employed them both and sent one way train tickets for

them to travel from their home in Sheffield. Margaret was 16 years old at the time, Phyllis was just 14.

They spent their first year working as chambermaids before Madam (Lilian) summonsed Margaret and informed her that from that day forward she would be her Lady's maid. Unfortunately there was a clash of personalities and Margaret's term in that position lasted only about a year before she was replaced by Sister Phyllis. Phyllis on the other hand loved the work and she regards her time at the Hall with the fondest of memories.

Margaret's day with Lilian started when summonsed by the servant's bell. The timing of the bell varied greatly depending on the amount of revelry the Cliftons had indulged in the previous evening. She remembers that the Cliftons loved to entertain. She had to take Lilian her breakfast in bed before bathing her, washing and setting her hair and then dressing her. It was also her responsibility to chose the clothes she thought Madam would like to wear that day, if Lilian didn't approve of the choice she would simply throw it back at Margaret who would then have to chose again from the vast wardrobes.

Once fed, washed and dressed Lilian and Squire Harry would be met at the front of the Hall by the stable boy and two horses for an early morning ride around the estate.

Margaret always found Squire Harry to be very charming and personable. Her most vivid memory of him was witnessing another of his daily rituals, the feeding of the pheasants. When she saw him appear at the front door of the Hall there wasn't a living creature in sight. But as soon as he started to scatter birdseed hundreds of birds, mainly pheasants appeared as if from no-where to mob the Squire and take his food. She thought it a fascinating sight.

More from Margaret and Phyllis in future issues.

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. A phone call (728186) or something written down on paper would be appreciated.

### **Hidden Art Treasures**

Sarah Kellam, great, great granddaughter of Richard Ansdell and tireless campaigner for the Hidden Art Treasures, was featured in the Lytham St Annes Express (14<sup>th</sup> October) for her efforts to get a Blue Plaque displayed on Starr Hills, home of her famous forefather when he was resident here.

Sarah wrote to the Friends in response to the letter of her co-campaigner, Margaret Race, in the September Newsletter appealing for support:

*“Again and again during the campaign the reasoning comes back to Lytham Hall being the most obvious and ideal venue for the collection to be exhibited. I may be blissfully unaware of any ‘red tape’ problems that may exist with this but surely it is in the Friends best interests to campaign vigorously for the collection as, if it were contained in Lytham Hall, it would make the Hall an extremely attractive place to visit.*

*We are desperately in need of as much support as we can get and plenty of back-up publicity in the Express and I appeal to you as a Friend on behalf of myself and Nigel Ansdell (who is a Patron) to rally as much support as you can. We have exhaustively kept up the momentum and now it is time to hear the voices of other art lovers who would be delighted to see the collection brought out into the open and given the airing it so richly deserves”*

Any support or further information can be directed through Margaret Race on Tel 01253-727268

### **Recent Events: Fashion Show**

Our Fashion Show held at Lytham Hall and presented by Stringers of Lytham was an evening enjoyed by all. Our only disappointment was that we couldn't accommodate all who wanted tickets.

Our warmest thanks to Mr & Mrs Clarke, Damien Clarke and all the staff of Stringers who worked behind the scenes to present such a professional and polished show. The models, from teenagers to mature ladies, wore a variety of the most popular collections found at Stringers from sumptuous silk pyjamas to the exquisite velvet evening dress at the finale. What temptation, especially with the generous 10% discount offered by Stringers to ticket holders in the week following the show!

Thanks also go to all who helped on the night and to all who attended. We raised £773 on the evening, all of which will be going to the purchase of the Clifton Collection.

### **Annual General Meeting – 23rd September**

The Friends of Lytham Hall held their AGM on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> September at the Assembly rooms Lytham. Many interesting points were raised from the floor of the meeting. Concern was expressed by those members who attended regarding the future of the Clifton Collection and the lack of public information regarding the current situation. The Secretary was asked to write to the LTT to request some further information. This has now been done and we await their reply with interest.

Our Chairman David Coupe went through his report and the accounts and thanked those people who have been so actively involved in supporting us either in raising funds or at the Hall itself on Open Days etc. There is still much more to be achieved and the future of the Clifton Collection has yet to be secured.

The Treasurer reported that the membership of the Friends now stands at 161, several of which were covenanted and we have had a number of gift aid donations. We would like to thank those members of the Friends who have chosen to support us in this way. If you would like further information on covenanting or gift aid please contact the Treasurer who will be only too happy to supply you with the relevant documentation.

A suggestion was made from the floor of the meeting that perhaps those members of the Friends who are concerned about the future of the Clifton Collection should write and express their concerns direct to members of the Lytham Town Trust. Should you wish to do this then please contact the Friends Secretary on Tel. 727696 who will be pleased to supply you with a list of the Town Trust board members.

### Lytham St Annes Express Gala

Our Secretary Liz Guffogg received the following letter from Mrs Anne Pinder, the Custodian at Lytham Hall:

*“Will you please convey to all those members of the Friends who helped on the Lytham St Annes Express Gala my sincere thanks and appreciation for their efforts. Special thanks to the volunteers helping in the tearoom, an experience, from which many lessons were learned for next year’s event.”*

### **Forthcoming Events:**

#### **Christmas Fair. 4th December – 10.30am**

We are very grateful for suggestions made after the last newsletter about where we might hold a Fair. We have booked the Wesley Hall at the corner of Park St and Westby St, Lytham for Saturday morning 4th December.

It will follow the same successful format as previous years, Tea/Coffee room, Stalls, Tombola, Raffle, Poinsettias, Cakes, Bric a Brac etc. Tom Eccles will be on hand to sign Christmas cards. Please do your best to support this, our last event of the century. Do come and help us on the day, encourage your

friends to support us, and give as many things as you can for the stalls – especially the cakes/produce stall.

As well as the regular stalls we will be selling second hand pre-recorded video tapes. If anyone has any pre-recorded video tapes that are surplus to requirements please send them in. The only stipulation is that they must be original recordings.

Contact any of the phone numbers given at the end of the newsletter for collection, or bring your donations with you on the day. Remember all we make will go to the Hall.

### **Christmas at the Hall**

There will be no Friends Christmas function at the Hall this year.

As we announced in the last newsletter the Hall is fully booked for the available weekend dates. Our involvement this festive season will be limited to the dressing of the Christmas tree in the Ballroom donated once again by Ashtons Garden Centre Lytham.

### **HoG Roast & HoE Down’**

A date for your millennium diary- Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2000. We have booked the stable yard for next year’s HoG Roast. We feel so confident about the event after staging it in an absolute downpour this year that it just has to be better weather next time. Some of our guests enjoyed it so much they suggested making it a monthly event – as the steam rose off their clothes! The stables certainly have a very intimate feel about them.

### **Snowdrop Walk**

This year was the first opportunity we had ever had to see the snowdrops in the grounds of Lytham Hall in full bloom. Well over 100 people turned out in the rain on Valentine’s Day for a guided walk organised by the Friends.

We are pleased to inform you that the Hall will be holding a special Open Day for the snowdrops in 2000, on the 13<sup>th</sup> February,

from 11am – 3pm. The entrance to the grounds will be £1.00, 50p for Children. Soup and hot lunches will be available in the tearoom as well as cakes and hot drinks.

The Friends will lead two walks around the grounds, at 12.00pm and 1:30pm, starting from the front door of the Hall, or you can of course amble around yourself. There will be no charge for the guided walks. Outdoor stewards will be needed on the day too so contact Anne if you are prepared to turn out whatever the weather.

### **Coffee Morning – 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 2000**

We will be hosting a Coffee morning on the 19<sup>th</sup> Feb. The venue will be the Conservative club in Lytham. Of particular interest will be the Billiard table given to the club soon after Squire Harry Clifton came into his inheritance.

The popular story is that its very presence reminded Harry of his father's attempts to push him towards a more robust outdoor life rather than the academic style he preferred. Compulsory games of Billiards were played every night and Harry was severely rebuked for missing easy shots.

The Conservative club received a phone call from the new Squire offering the table to them for no charge on condition they removed it that very same day, which they did and it has been there ever since! - See you there.

### **Any Ideas!**

The Committee of the Friends still wants to hear from anyone with ideas for fund-raising and even better would be from people/ organisations & businesses prepared to stage and organise or even sponsor events.

### ***Lytham Hall***

#### **The importance of the rear courtyard**

When Thomas Clifton commissioned John Carr to design him a new hall, he of course already had one – dating from the early 17th century. He wanted to use the same site, and the existing buildings would be useful to live

in during the construction of the new house and for later domestic quarters. This would save money too. So the Georgian formal rooms were built onto the front of the old hall. There was no need for cellars or basements as in a town house of the time, as there was plenty of room at the rear.

Tudor and Jacobean houses were usually “E”, “U” or “H” shaped as the roof span was limited. They normally had a courtyard arrangement therefore at the front or back. It is likely that the old hall faced the opposite way to the new one. A fragment of a manuscript in the Clifton papers at the Lancashire Record Office dating about 1606, depicts Lytham Hall as a gabled 2-storey house with attics. This is the time that Cuthbert Clifton purchased the manor of Lytham. The ceiling beams near the back door to the courtyard have been dated back to the second quarter of the 16th century, probably before the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII in 1536-39.

Sir Thomas Holcroft acquired the manor in 1540 and may have rebuilt the house towards the end of the century in the style of the manuscript fragment. There was no reason to demolish useful buildings as a part of these re-fashionings. A full scientific/ archaeological investigation is needed before this area will give up its secrets. *Marion Coupe*

### **Curator at the Hall**

Great news! The organisation now controlling the day to day operation of the Hall, ‘The Heritage Trust for the North West’ has appointed Lucy Porter as Curator of Lytham Hall. Although only part-time at the Hall (she spends the rest of her time at the Pendle Heritage Museum) Lucy can start the essential task of cataloguing the Halls entire contents including of course the Clifton Collection. More news about her appointment will presumably be announced in the local papers. We wish her well in her new position.

### ***Handy Man no longer required***

One of our members, Mr Steve Jones of

Blackpool has responded to our appeal for 'A' boards by constructing and generously donating two for use by the Friends. It is support of this type that continually re-enforces our belief in the strength of feeling there is for the Hall. They will be used for the first time to direct people to the Xmas Fair.

### **Christmas Cards**

We are coming to the end of our stock of Christmas cards depicting the Hall in Winter. They still cost £1.25 each but to help clear our stock we are selling presentation packs of 5 cards for just £5. Cards can be obtained from any committee member or alternatively from the Christmas Fair.

### ***Come in number 5***

Here's a challenge. We are in the process of creating a Friends archive/scrap-book relating to our activities over the past four years. Unfortunately we find ourselves short of issue 5 of this Newsletter which would have been issued around June/July 1996. Does anyone still have a copy? If so can you please contact any of the committee who will arrange its copying and safe return?

### ***Contacts:***

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