

Friends of Lytham Hall

Newsletter

Registered Charity No: 1069442

February 2000

Issue 15

Welcome to Year 2000 with the "Friends of Lytham Hall"

Forthcoming Events:

Coffee Morning – 19th February

We will be hosting a Coffee morning on Saturday 19th February 10:00 am. The venue will be Lytham Conservative club in Hastings Place, Lytham. Of particular interest will be the Billiard table given to the club soon after Squire Harry Clifton came into his inheritance. There will also be a raffle, cake stall and Bottle Tombola plus any updated information we may have concerning the Hall and the Clifton Collection. Anyone wishing to make donations to any of the stalls can: bring them on the day; drop them at Coupe Bradbury Solicitors Office, Bath Street, Lytham; or phone any of the Committee to arrange collection. The cost will be £1 per person, which will include refreshments.

Snowdrop Walk – 13th February

Last 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 It will take place on the 13th 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 (01253) 736652 if you are prepared to turn out whatever the weather.

Other dates for your diaries:

Saturday 18th March - New to you Day

Rotary House, Lytham. Now is your chance to have a good tidy up and discard all those unwanted gifts, cloths and bric a brac. We will create a veritable treasure house – with your help. Let us know if you can help on the day.

1st July - HoG Roast & HoE Down'

A date for your millennium diary - Saturday 1st July. We have booked the stable yard for our third HoG Roast & HoE Down. We have been fortunate to once again book the services of the 'Festival Ceilidh band' who provided such terrific entertainment for us last year.

Easter Sunday & Monday 23rd & 24th April

During both these open days the Friends will be once again staging an Easter Bunny Treasure Trail for children in the grounds of the Hall between 12:00 – 3:00pm. The trail will differ from last years. Cost will be just 50p per child (on top of the entrance charge).

September 2000 – Visit to Tabley House

In 1997 the Friends hosted a visit from 52 'Friends' of Tabley House. It was always intended that we return the compliment

The Friends are arranging a visit around Tabley House near Knutsford, Cheshire. Our interest in Tabley House centre's around the fact that it was also designed by Lytham Hall's designer John Carr.

Built slightly later than Lytham, Tabley House is more obviously Palladian in design and contains a wonderful collection of paintings and furniture. More details will follow later in the year

Clifton Collection

The new millennium has started the same way as the old one finished with no positive news about the Clifton Collection. We continue to wait with baited breath.

Memories of the Hall

Bob Howarth of Moleneux place, worked as a decorator at the Hall around 1961. Whilst there Mrs Violet Clifton presented him with a signed souvenir brochure of the Hall which had been compiled using articles in Country Life dated July 21st & 28th 1960. Whilst there he also witnessed the visit of artist L.S.Lowry to the Hall.

Bob also remembers as a boy the fascination of the Hall and its grounds - creeping in and exploring as much of the grounds as he could whilst trying desperately not to be caught by the Gamekeeper and the Gardeners. On one occasion he managed to pluck up courage to sneak into the stable yard and open one of the doors. Imagine his surprise when instead of a horse he came upon a huge bear (stuffed of course) reared up and apparently about to lunge at him! Well, around he turned and fled out of the grounds his feet not touching the ground, all the while quite convinced that the Bear was right behind him.

It was many weeks before young Bob plucked up the courage to return to the Hall. His explanation now is that his little encounter took place during the war, during which time the west wing of the Hall was being used as a convalescent hospital for servicemen. Because of this everything that had been kept in the west wing had to be stored in the stables.

I would be interested to know the reason for the Lowry visit, if anyone knows anything could they please contact me. – Editor

Wartime at the Hall

Miss Alicia Cottrell of Abbeyfield House, Lytham, has written to tell us of one of the occasions she visited the Hall during the war when the west wing was converted into a

convalescent home for the wounded members of the armed forces.

She was one of the members of a unit that called themselves 'The Go To It Unit' that used to entertain members of the armed forces.

One day they were entertaining at the Hall, when one of the Soldiers who had already seen them perform at the training camp at Squires Gate (now Pontins) called out for Alicia to do the Clog Dance to the tune 'Lassie from Lancashire'. When she replied that she hadn't brought her music or costume with her, the Soldier asked her to do it as she was and that the audience would whistle the tune. So borrowing a headscarf and an apron from one of the nurses she danced the "Lancashire Clog Dance" to a whistling audience and as they say 'the show went on'.

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.

Recent Events:

Christmas Fair

The **Friends** annual Christmas Fair took place on Sat. 4th December at the Wesley Hall, Lytham raising £430 for the cause.

Despite the weather being thoroughly disgusting and the event a little out of the way there was a steady stream of people, many of them familiar faces who braved the elements to make the event a success.

Thanks go to everyone who turned out in such miserable weather. Special thanks to all those who donated prizes and articles for sale and especially those who helped on the day.

Tom Eccles turned out once again to support the cause by signing Christmas cards. Tom has also agreed to provide the artwork for the

next **Friends** Christmas card.

Although it was very generous of the Church to allow us to use the Hall, it was felt that the Assembly rooms are better positioned to catch passing trade and we have therefore already booked them for this years Christmas Fair.

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

Is there an Ice House at Lytham Hall?

About 100 metres to the south of the Hall in fairly dense woodland is a high earthen mound called the Mount. It is likely that a windmill stood on it in medieval times, perhaps one of two thought to have been near the Hall, and further south is the "mill field". Nearby is the large circular expanse of Curtains Pond.

It is said that inside the Mount is an ice house which used to be filled with ice from the pond, which itself had been dug out to form the Mount. This is all fairly conjectural, although an ice house is marked on the Hall (north and coldest) side of the Mount on the 1844 OS map, and there is at least one reference in the Clifton papers to an ice house being used. There is no sign of an opening into the Mount however and we could expect there to be tree root damage by now.

It was quite usual for a large residence to have an ice house in the period 1750-1900. Most of them comprised a brick lined circular pit with a domed roof which was usually covered with soil. The bottom part would be built below ground as the temperature would be fairly low and steady there. At the bottom of the structure there was a drain with an air trap. This was important as dampness was as great a threat to the ice as high temperatures.

At the first hard frosts a team of men would collect and break up ice from ponds and purpose built shallow pools, and store it as quickly as possible. Once filled, the ice store was shut up and the entrance tunnel filled with more ice, or straw. It would not be opened up until the summer months when the ice was taken into the house. It was used in the kitchens for keeping fish, meat and dairy products cool, and for the preparation of desserts. It was also used for cooling wine, the treatment of fevers and sometimes the cooling of rooms. Food was not usually stored in the ice house as this necessitated more frequent visits to the store and more rapid melting of the ice.

Ice houses fell into disuse from the late C19th when block ice, cut from frozen lakes in the USA and Norway was imported. Domestic refrigerators were introduced at the beginning of the C20th. Probably the nearest ice house you can visit from Lytham is at Brantwood near Coniston, home of John Ruskin. The mystery of the Lytham Hall ice house remains.

Marion Coupe

Lily Pond

We have been informed that work around the Lily pond has been carried out by the Groundsman, Mr Gibson assisted by a day release student from Myerscough College. A path has been cleared enabling people to walk right round the back of the pond where the remains of the old Boat house can now be seen. Stout walking shoes are advised, as the route is muddy in places. Children should be accompanied by an Adult as the pond is not fenced. Access can be made during any of the open days quoted at the end of this Newsletter.

Amazed

Thanks to all those that responded to our search for a back issue of this newsletter (issue 5). We received an amazing 9 offers of help. Our archive/ scrapbook is now bang up to date.

Membership

Membership is at a healthy level, however we must not be complacent. We must always remember that our support of the Hall is long term. In many ways our work is only just beginning. Even after the Clifton Collection has been secured there will be much to do before the Hall can fulfil all the aspirations we, and the people of the Fylde, have for it.

Although professionally managed the Hall will depend very heavily on an energetic and willing band of enthusiastic volunteers for its long term upkeep and running. It is therefore in every ones interest that the support base of this group continues to grow. Other groups do make valuable contributions to its well being, but the **Friends** are the only group who by their constitution exist exclusively to support Lytham Hall. Only the **Friends of Lytham Hall** guarantee that every penny collected, raised, donated, begged, and borrowed will go exclusively towards the Hall and the Clifton collection.

So please do what you can to introduce friends, family, neighbours, colleagues and acquaintances to the **Friends**. Every new member represents a giant step towards guaranteeing the future well being of the Hall and its collection.

For membership forms Contact: Pauline Hamilton on (01253) 736857

The Heritage Trust for the North West have announced the Hall open dates for 2000

Feb*	Sunday	13 th	(Snowdrops)
April	Sunday	23 rd	(Easter)
	Monday	24 th	(Easter)
May	Sunday	28 th	
	Monday	29 th	(Bank Holiday)
June*	Saturday	17 th	(Craft Fair)
June*	Sunday	18 th	(")
June	Sunday	25 th	
July	Sunday	30 th	
Aug	Sunday	19 th	(Express Weekend)
	Monday	20 th	

Aug	Sunday	27 th	
Aug	Monday	28 th	(Bank Holiday)
Sept	Sunday	24 th	
Dec	Sunday	10 th	

* Grounds & Tea- room only

Additional dates when the grounds only will be open are being considered

Admission charges:

On normal open days: Adults £3.00 Children £1.50 for entry to Hall & grounds.

For entry to Grounds only: Adults £1:00 Children 50p

Charges for the Express Funday will be different.

Contacts:

David Coupe, Chairman: (01253) 733563

Liz Guffogg, Secretary: (01253) 727696

Kay Hopper, Treasurer: (01253) 736688

John Martin, Newsletter: (01253) 728186

P. Hamilton, Membership: (01253) 736857

Kath Smith, Volunteers: (01253) 737548

Anne Pinder, Hall Custodian: (01253) 736652