

Friends of Lytham Hall

Newsletter

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LOT 251

Sale of Clifton Furniture

The Friends were recently made aware by Sothebys of London of a set of 12 Gillow mahogany dining chairs that were coming up for auction at their sale room in London.

The Chairs were supplied to John Talbot Clifton (1819-1892) for Lytham Hall and bear the embossed initialled monogram of John Talbot's wife Eleanor Cecily Lowther, sister of the 3rd Earl of Lonsdale whom he married in 1884.

The chairs were in very poor condition but still upholstered in the original material with the monogram clearly visible.

The Friends committee was extremely excited when they found out about these chairs and were very keen to acquire them for the Hall.

Items associated with the Hall have from time to time come on to the market. In the past Guardian Insurance bought some of these to add to the much depleted collection and the Friends were hoping to do these with these chairs.

A member of the Friends committee went to London to view the chairs and a telephone bid was made but unfortunately we were pipped at the post at the last minute. The chairs finally went for £17,000!

We have since found out that the chairs had descended through the family and had been passed on by one of the children of Arthur Clifton a brother to John Talbot (1868-1928) both of whom were grandchildren of Eleanor Cecily.

There have also been 2 other lots at Sothebys in recent weeks that belonged to Eleanor Cecily that have come from the same source. One was a picture of a spaniel by John Fernley (1782-1860) painted in November 1849, the other being by the same artist of a

favourite hunter commissioned by Eleanor Cecily in June 1848.

The Friends learnt about the portrait sale too late to make any kind of bid for the paintings but it would have been wonderful if our first major purchase could have resulted in any one of these items being returned to the Hall.

Forthcoming Events:

AGM – Wednesday 26th Sept

Our Annual General Meeting has been set for Wed. 26th Sept. in the Ribble room of the Assembly rooms, Lytham.

The meeting starts at 7:30pm, however only fully paid up members are eligible to attend and vote at the meeting. Anyone unsure of eligibility can phone the membership Secretary Pauline Hamilton on (01253) 736857.

The Cliftons and Kildalton Castle, Isle of Islay

There are several paintings of Scottish scenes at the Hall, and a photograph of Kildalton at the rear of the servant's wing. John Talbot Clifton loved the place, built as it was in true Scottish baronial style with tower. He entertained friends there for hunting and shooting. Produce was sent monthly from Lytham in great hampers - including nectarines from the conservatory at Lytham Hall (now the site of Home Farm). John Talbot died in the Canaries and his body was brought back to Islay for burial on a remote hillside, marked by a memorial.

Harry Clifton neglected and sold Kildalton and it has become ruinous, guarded by fierce dogs.

Tom Stringer has some slides taken from old photos of Kildalton, which we will be able to see after the AGM on 26 September. Not a lot has been written about the Cliftons in Scotland. If anyone has information, news

titbits etc, please share them with us either before, or at the meeting.

Express Gala Day - Monday 27th August

Don't forget the Express Gala Day at the Hall on Monday 27th August. Always a fun day and, with proceeds going to the Hall, is a great way of supporting it. We are running a stall at the event. If you can spare a few hours to help out please ring Kath Smith on (01253) 737548.

Other dates for your diaries:

Autumn Fair – 10th Nov. Assembly rooms, Lytham

Evening of Christmas cheer at the Hall – Friday 14th Dec.

Keep this date open. If this year's event is anything like as good as previous, we should be in for another memorable evening.

Recent Events:

Evening of Colour – May 17th

'Thank you to all the Friends and guests who attended our 'Evening of Colour' at the Assembly Rooms on May 17th. We raised just over £207. Gillian White and her model gave us a thoroughly entertaining evening and I think that most of us came away intrigued by how colours that enhance our particular complexion can give such vibrant results.

Gillian White is not only a Colour Analyst but also an Image Consultant and is happy to take group bookings. So if you would like a fun day out with your friends you can contact Gillian on 01253 893 787. Don't forget to mention that you attended her talk at the Assembly Rooms or are a Friend as she will very kindly donate a percentage of her fee to the Friends cause.'

Hog Roast – Saturday June 16th

The Friends were gutted at having to cancel the HoG Roast & Hoe Down at the Stable yard, Lytham Hall.

It had seemed; from very early on, that the evening was doomed, over half the committee

and two of our most enthusiastic groups of supporters were scheduled to be away on the evening. Then, at the last moment, we were told that the Hog man had double booked the event and could not support us with a Hog. No Hog and low numbers coupled with a poor weather forecast finally put paid to any realistic chance we had of making it a success. Many thanks, and our apologies, go to all those who had paid for and were looking forward to an evening which has always been enjoyable.

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.

Grand Draw

As explained in the last Newsletter, we are enclosing 2 Grand Draw books of tickets. Please try and sell (or buy) them and ask for more if you can. You are, of course, not obliged to do any of these things and we apologise if this fundraising is obtrusive.

Thanks to all that have contributed prizes and especially to Meg Hargreaves for the work she has put into putting together the following list of prizes.

Weekend for 2 at the Dalmeny Hotel.

Portable Colour Television.

£50 Meal Voucher for Arcobaleno, Lytham.

£30 Voucher for Ribby Hall Leisure Centre.

£30 Meal Voucher for Mr Chow's, St Annes.

Sunday Lunch for 2 at St Ives Hotel.

Brace of Pheasants from Lanigans, Lytham.

Voucher for Grant Smith's Physio Centre.

£10 Voucher for Stringers, Lytham.

£10 Voucher - Barton Grange Garden Centre.

This list is by no means complete as more prizes are being pledged every week. The draw will take place at our Autumn Fair at 12:00pm on 10th November at the Assembly rooms, Lytham.

If anyone can offer suggestions on locations and venues where the friends can sell these tickets please contact Meg Hargreaves on (01253)

Please return all stubs and unused books to our Treasurer: Mrs Kay Hopper 48 Trent St. Lytham St Annes. Lancs. FY8 5DD

Memories of the Hall

The last newsletter contained the news that the Hall had come into the possession of a photo of a giant tree that blown over during a gale. A number of people were sat upon the tree and their dress dated the photo around the 1920's.

We had earlier run as story by Christine Nuttall, who witnessed the falling of a giant Cedar tree from the dining room of the Hall. Curious to know whether it was the same tree we have contacted her sister Jean (Catlow) who has seen the photo and has sent in the following report:

“In answer to your letter, concerning the photograph of the Cedar of Lebanon, blown down in a gale

Actually it was my youngest sister Christine Canti, who watched it from the dining room window, but I do know the tree because I remember well the shallow roots! (We always used to find little pellets of fur & bone, spat out by the owls in the tree, then standing!).

The people on the photo are, Miss Taylor (our nursery Governess), Betty Gillibrand (aged about 6), my sister Christine, my 3rd sister Alison (aged about 9 or 10) and the boy is either Richard Gillibrand or his brother John. The Gillibrands were great friends and lived in a nice house next door to the Clifton Arms Hotel – can't remember if it was the “White House” then? John eventually married my second sister Pat”.

For those interested in seeing the photograph, we will have a copy on display at the AGM and at the Autumn Fair.

Wartime at the Hall

Two friends who worked together at the Hall during the War have written in to explain their experiences, Pat Moorhouse and Betty Kershaw, both still living in St Annes, were both employed at the Hall during the War. This report will reflect on Pat's memories.

The Hall started the war as an Army convalescence Hospital and was later upgraded to the status of an auxiliary Military Hospital. The main rooms were converted thus: The Library was the Surgery. The Chinese room (living room) was the Commandants room. The Ballroom was a lounge, which doubled as an amusement/theatre for visiting celebrities like Elizabeth Welsh and Rawicz & Landau. The Main Entrance Hall was used as a Games room with a billiard table. The Dining room was not surprisingly the Dining room - the Gillow Sideboard was boarded over and Pat didn't know what was behind the boarding until much later, when she returned on one of Guardians' open days and saw it. The Billiard room and the Long Gallery were wards as were all the rooms on the first and second floor. The staff's living quarters were situated in the two wings.

A photograph of Bettys shows no less than 40 Nursing staff, including two state registered nurses, the commandant, Matron and the rest a mixture of St Johns nurses from St Annes and Red Cross Nurses from Blackpool. Pat believes that the Hospital could take about 100 patients.

Pat remembers the Commandant as Hilda Smith – a larger than life character who used to treat her nurses to trips to the theatre in Blackpool and meals. A spooky story accompanies her. Apparently one night whilst doing her rounds she passed through one ward (the Billiard room) to the next which was the Long Gallery and back. As she returned one of the soldiers asked her where the nurse was that had followed her through to the Long Gallery dorm. She had gone alone! The co-

incidence though that it is the very spot where the other sightings of the “Grey Lady” have taken place.

Pat’s duties rotated around the Wards, Kitchen, Dining room and Housework, - she remembers the Hall being in a good state of repair – spotlessly clean. Her wages were 30 shillings per week (£1.50) and she worked 6 days per week.

As D-Day was approaching the Hall was emptied of all but the worst of the inmates and all staff leave cancelled. Then exactly 3 weeks after, the patients started to arrive – in droves. They later received one chap who was part of the force that liberated the Belson concentration camp and some former inmates of Japanese prisoner of war camps who were horrifyingly emaciated.

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.

Lytham Hall

Volunteers Required

Thanks to those who contacted the Hall offering volunteer help. The Friends are desperate for the Hall to be open for public access as often as possible, however, the increased opening dates require a larger pool of volunteers. We would once again urge all Friends to seriously consider volunteering. Even if you can only manage the occasional day please offer it, no prior experience is required. Those who are willing to offer help should contact Ann Pinder or Ruthmary Paul on 736652

Kendal’s Lodge

The Friends have been made aware of the remains of Kendal’s Lodge. It was thought that this Lodge had been demolished during the development of Fairhaven Golf club and Lytham Hall Park West estate.

Also known as Shepherd’s Lodge it is now so densely surrounded by trees and shrubbery that it is practically impossible to access. Also, because of its unstable condition there are signs instructing no entry.

An external inspection of the lodge has revealed the ravages suffered by years of neglect. Many missing slates has allowed ingress of water which has resulted in most of the internal woodwork being rotten and trees growing out of the outhouses.

Despite its small size, the basic design of the lodge is very interesting with 4 different roof formations intersecting to give a pleasing external appearance. The Kitchen/scullery has an earthen floor, but the two other two main rooms – the reception room and the bedroom were built with suspended floors - now collapsed.

The lodge is located in ‘Big Wood’ at the opposite end of the original access road that bisects the Golf course from the Hall’s West gate (adjacent to the pshantry). This road used to exit on Hey Houses at the bottom of Regent road at the point where the original gates are still located. We must point out however that the lodge is on private land and access of any kind is totally at the behest of the Golf Club.

We hope to give more information on the lodge, including a floor plan, in future editions of the newsletter. If anyone knows of any stories, information or even photographs of this lodge, could they please contact any of the Friends committee.

European Heritage Weekend Sept. 8th/9th

Hundreds of properties are open this weekend (free of charge) -which are not normally open to the public. Lytham St Annes Civic Society has permission from the Lancashire Constabulary to open the Grade II listed Lytham Magistrates Court and cells. Times on both days are 11am to 4pm, and there will be exhibitions on the operation of the now closed

Edwardian court. The Friends will be selling our Grand Draw tickets there. These annual weekends are a good way to draw attention to threatened buildings and previous openings have included Lytham Hall when it was owned by Guardian.

Friends of Lytham Hall Web-Site

The launch of our Web-site, although delayed longer than originally thought, is now imminent. The final few links and registration details are currently being finalised. More details will be contained within the next edition of this Newsletter. Until then keep looking for our Web-site on www.lythamhall.org.

Book Reviews

Due to amount of content available for this edition of the newsletter, the book reviews on the "*Catalogue of Books from the Library of Lytham Hall*" & the "*The Life and Works of John Carr of York.*" will now be included in the November edition.

Lytham Hall open dates for the remainder of 2001 are:

The Hall

Every Sunday until October 28th

Admission: Adults £3.00, Children £1.50.

Grounds, Tearoom & Shop.

The Grounds, Tearoom & Shop will be open free of charge on the same Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays as the Hall plus each Sunday in November. 11.00am to 5.00pm (or dusk if sooner). We would urge all to use the grounds and Tearoom for a regular Sunday stroll.

Contacts:

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