

Friends of Lytham Hall

Newsletter

Registered Charity No: 1069442

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Issue 26

What! The final newsletter of 2002. It hardly seems possible. It doesn't seem long ago when we were wondering what content we could put into the newsletter in a year when the Hall was to be closed. However, what we perceived to be a quiet year has really been one of profound change for the Hall. With the renovations to the West Wing and Gatehouses well underway, plus the proposals to turn the grounds into a Country Park, the Hall's future direction and purpose appear to be slowly evolving. Also, the energies being put in by the Lytham Town Trust and the Heritage Trust for the North West are a clear demonstration of their commitment and faith in the viability of the Hall as a going concern. All good news and we go into 2003 with a warmer feeling about the prospects of the Hall than we have had for some years.

Forthcoming Events:

Evening of Christmas cheer. – 13th Dec.

Bookings are now being taken for the 2002 "Evening of Christmas Cheer" this year being held at Green Drive Golf Club. The format is the same as in recent years i.e. reception, meal, entertainment and carol singing to wind up the evening. The entertainment will once again be provided by Don Sheerin and friends and the hot meal will consist of 3 courses with coffee to follow.

Whilst it is understood that the major attraction of our Christmas event is that it is normally held in the wonderful surroundings of the Hall, it is hoped that members will still support this year's event. Green Drive Golf Club has a reputation for its hospitality and we are sure that the evening will be a great success.

Tickets are reasonably priced at £16 and tickets are available by contacting Kath Smith on 737548 or by using the cut off strip at the end of the newsletter.

Autumn Fair – Saturday 26th October.

This year's Autumn Fair is going ahead as we

go to print. Therefore thanks in anticipation are required for all who donated items, cakes etc. who helped on the day and those who turned up to support the event. Thanks again to Tom Eccles who no doubt signed a mountain of Christmas cards. And finally to Brian East the Assembly Rooms manager for his support and help on the day.

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.

Recent Events

AGM – 25th September. Assembly Rooms, Lytham

The 2002 AGM was well attended with over 60 people turning out, mostly to hear the talk by Mr John Miller of the Heritage Trust for the North West. The vice Chairman Mr RAC Smith deputised in the absence of the Chairman Mrs Liz Guffogg who was busy bringing a new 'Friend' into the world – The lengths some people will go to raise membership! We are pleased to announce that Liz and husband Nigel have been blessed with the birth of a healthy little girl – Eleanor Violet May – all good solid Clifton names. Her membership number will follow shortly.

The main points of the Chairman's report were as follows:

- The West wing renovations are well advanced and will provide a conference and function facility – a source of income for the Hall.
- The Country Park plans are progressing well.
- Lancashire CC has dropped plans for a new entrance breaching the cobbled boundary wall after much opposition from local bodies.
- The Hall was closed in October 2001, so the Friends activities have been limited

and there was no Hog Roast event this year. However, our booking for the 'Evening of Christmas Cheer' was honoured by HTNW.

- The successful 'Grand Draw' and 'Christmas Fair' boosted funds considerably.
- There is no concrete news on the future of the Clifton Collection – another lottery bid has been submitted.
- The Hall has received a grant for the renovation of the main Gatehouses.

Three members of the committee, Kath Smith, Marion Coupe and Meg Hargreaves were re-elected unopposed.

Kay Hopper presented the Treasurers report. The main features of which was the opening of a COIF account. This is an account specifically aimed at charities, which attracts greater interest than a normal high street bank account. Kay thanked Dennis Leyland of the Civic Society for his advice and help with setting up the account. Total funds held on the 31st May 2002 were £25,696.

Memories of the Hall

It is a while since we printed any extracts from the letters sent by Christine Nuttall, the fourth and youngest daughter of Capt. and Mrs W E Nuttall who rented Lytham Hall for about 15 years before moving into a house called Riversleigh (recently demolished for a new housing development) on the sand dunes at Lytham. Despite her advanced years she has a wonderful memory and a lovely expressive style about her writing. She concludes...

"I could reminisce forever, about the life we lived in that lovely place. But I will end with a couple of memories of happenings in the grounds. My mother used to have a Garden Party every summer, in aid of Dr Barnardo's with stalls and side-shows and teas, out on the lawns. But the great joy for us children was that two horse-drawn carriages used to come, to drive children up the long drive. We would spend the whole afternoon sitting beside the

driver, on the box going up and down the drive, for as long as we were allowed. It was magic! My other memories are about the beautiful lake, at the end of the North lawn. It had a Japanese-style bridge, and lots of ornamental ducks, and was surrounded by a mass of wonderful azaleas, with their evocative scent. Oh and I must mention, too, the exciting days when the Territorials would come and camp in the park; I fell in love with several of them, and we used to hear the trumpet-calls from the camp, at mealtimes and reveille."

"We left Lytham Hall when I was about 10. It was a start to my life that I will never forget."

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.

Volunteer Required

We have a requirement for a Postie for one of our rounds – Area Q. 11 newsletters covering just 8 streets around the Fairhaven/Ansdell area: Eddington Rd, Clifton Drive, Finsbury Ave, Kingsway, Pollux Gate, St. Pauls Ave, Miletas Place & Myra Rd.

If you can spare a little time once every three months please phone any of the committee at the end of the newsletter.

Thanks go to Mrs Barbara Johnson who has serviced this round for the past 4 years.

Lytham Hall

The Gatehouses

Work on the Main Gatehouses has started. No decisions have been made for their ultimate

use, however the restoration will not only prevent further deterioration of the buildings and gates but will also return them to a useable standard.

New Starter

We have heard that the Hall has a new full-time member of staff. His name is Dr Samuel Johnson. Dr Johnson, currently living in Clitheroe, is due to start shortly and will be responsible for most of the activities at the Hall.

HTNW – The wider perspective

As already reported the 2002 AGM was well attended with over 60 people turning out, mostly to hear the talk by Mr John Miller of the Heritage Trust for the North West

Mr Miller kept the audience engaged for about 70 minutes with a slide show presentation of the wider brief of HTNW.

He started off by explaining the primary consideration of the trust being the acquisition and restoration of historic buildings deemed to be 'at risk' and bringing back into use, sometimes in roles far removed from their original purpose but without altering the original fabric of the buildings concerned. The Trust also has a consultative role, advising on building conservation and restoration.

Underlying the presentation was the virtue of patience, Many of the projects undertaken by Heritage Trust for the North West have taken many numbers of years to come to fruition but by being patient many difficulties and problems that seemed insurmountable at the time have been overcome.

With the use of photos and maps, John showed the evolution of the Trust's first project, the Pendle Heritage centre at Barrowford. He explained how the project had started with the purchase of just one building then subsequently developed into what is now a major visitor attraction complex spread over many acres. The

Medieval Cruck Barn project was particularly interesting, with photos showing the moving and rebuilding of the Barn onto the Pendle site.

Mr Miller went on to give an update on Lytham Hall and in particular the progress of the West Wing. He emphasised his commitment to renovation in keeping with the quality of the surroundings. The time taken to complete the renovations has taken longer than expected due to the insistence of 'getting it right' and adapting sympathetically and truthfully to problems exposed during renovation, like the replacement of the internal staircase and the decision to put in a lift.

One thing that he made very clear was that every one of the Heritage Trust for the North West projects had to be self financing, that none of them existed to support the other. Until very recently Lytham Hall was running at a considerable budget deficit that could not be sustained.

He went on to mention a few of the long term ideas for the Hall which could include restoring the road around the perimeter of the woodland so as to allow for a clear frontal vista of the Hall, with parking to the rear of the buildings. The restoration of the Mound would provide an accurate representation of an important part of the history of the Hall. He also expressed a desire to install/restore more colours to the grounds including the restoration of the internal car park to a Parterre. A more long-term project might be the acquisition & restoration of the walled garden currently belonging to Home Farm.

He did not rule out the use of some of the buildings within the grounds as holiday lets. Apparently some of the other projects that HTNW are involved with use associated buildings to generate valuable income such as the Toll House at Barrowford. The restored Gatehouse could be used as such.

Also it was very interesting to note Mr Miller

conceding that renovation and conservation, as well as being vehicles for best knowledge, also come down to best judgement and sometimes guesswork. An example of this was the removal of whitewash from the exterior of the Pendle Heritage Centre building. Research now indicates that whitewash was more commonly used around the time it was built than was originally thought.

An interesting project concerns an area of Nelson, East Lancashire, known as Whitefield. It is still largely unchanged, with a 19th century street plan of substantial terraced housing, schools, Mill and shops, dominated by St. Mary's Church. The nearby Leeds and Liverpool Canal also reflects the industrial heritage of the area. Starting in the sixties but continuing until recently a huge swathe was cut through Nelson as much of the town was demolished with little or no regard to conservation. HTNW has played a major role in reversing the misguided concept of progress by wholesale demolition and replacement. Nelson was founded as a manufacturing/Mill town and to do away with everything related to its heritage – its reason for being, would leave it without any feel of what preceding generations had spent lifetimes creating.

A lot of what HTNW has done is educating and encouraging the local population towards a vision of what the Whitefield district could aspire to, comparisons to Saltaire near Bradford being entirely appropriate. The successful appeal to reverse the demolition orders on a large number of terraced housing (local stone and slate roofs) has allowed the implementation of a scheme of sensitive renovation and resale to the local populace at affordable prices. This will help to ensure that the indigenous population remains as the heart of what will be a culturally rich and historically important area of the town.

As a demonstration of their own commitment to the project HTNW have bought St. Mary's Church and the mill around which the

community was originally formed. The Church is a major feature of the town, its tower and spire soar to 198 feet, the second highest in Lancashire. The church was declared redundant by the Blackburn Diocese in 1989 and has become neglected and vandalised. The Trust has moved quickly to clear and secure the building. The stained glass windows - including two designs by Burne-Jones - have been removed to prevent further damage. Planning for the Mill, one of the original cotton mills in Lancashire, will take time, and lots of consultation to enable a sensitive conversion into something that will benefit the community without destroying the symbolism of what the mill was to the town. One idea is to replicate the HTNW conversion of Higherford Mill, Barrowford, into a facility for arts and creative industries.

All in all a very encouraging and enlightening presentation. John Martin gave a vote of thanks to Mr Miller on behalf of the Friends. John expressed the Friends desire to see the occasion as a foundation for greater co-operation and understanding between the two parties. As a sign of goodwill he presented Mr Miller for a cheque for £50 made out to HTNW as a mark of respect for the presentation and for the Friends acknowledgement of works undertaken by the Trust in the wider community.

Country Park

Mr Miller in his presentation at the AGM informed the Friends that the conversion of Lytham Hall into a Country Park was still a possibility but that a number of obstacles still had to be resolved. He expressed his own relief that Lancashire CC had dropped the plan to breach the cobbled wall to create a new entrance and stressed that HTNW had been against the idea from the outset.

Membership

Just a final reminder for those handful of members who have still not returned their membership renewal forms – yes that one stuck behind the clock on the mantelpiece, put there with the intention of 'getting around to

it as soon as possible!' please do it. It is only £5 and remember, every penny raised by the Friends goes exclusively to the Hall.

During the coming years the Hall will require a lot of attention. It gives the impression of a building in good condition but as the renovation of the West Wing has discovered it is a lot more fragile than it looks. It was only the back end of last year when a lump of masonry fell off one of the capitals on the front of the Hall. HTNW is very knowledgeable at knowing where acquire grants to help fund major and minor works at the Hall but as with most grants a good portion has to be raised locally to match.

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

Questions

If any of the membership has a question concerning Lytham Hall they would like answering or even an observation they would like to share please write to the Newsletter Editor at 168 Church road, St Annes FY8 3NJ. He will endeavour to get an answer from the relevant people. If the letter is considered to be of interest to the wider membership we will print it and the answer in the newsletter.

Contacts:

- Liz Guffogg*, Chairman: (01253) 727696
- Kath Smith*, Secretary: (01253) 737548
- Kay Hopper*, Treasurer: (01253) 736688
- John Martin*, Newsletter: (01253) 728186
- P. Hamilton*, Membership: (01253) 736857
- Marion Coupe*, Events: (01253) 733563
- Ann Pinder*, Hall Custodian: (01253) 736652

Carole can you please spread this, as a tear off strip across a page.

I should like to attend the Evening of Christmas Cheer on Dec 13th at Green Drive Golf Club, Lytham..

Name.

Address.
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Post Code. Telephone

Please send me _ _ _ tickets at £16.00 each

I enclose my remittance of £ and a stamped addressed envelope.

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

***Please return with remittance to:
Mrs Kath Smith
28 Park View Road
Lytham
Lytham St Annes. FY8 4JE***

If any further information is required Kath can also be contacted on (01253) 737548
