

Friends of Lytham Hall

Newsletter

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Kendal's Lodge

Friends of Lytham Hall will know from press reports that Kendal's Lodge has been demolished by its owners, Fairhaven Golf Club. The *Friends* have a small exhibition about the Lodge, which was the only one of its type left unaltered. It was situated on the old road to Lytham Hall from the Trawlboat Inn which is now part of Fairhaven Golf Course. The Lodge was lived in by Clifton estate employees from the early 19th century until the mid 20th, and was built in the local vernacular style similar to Church Lodge on Church Road Lytham.

We think the lodge was called Kendal's as it was located near to the estate kennels. It has also been referred to as Shepherd's Lodge, after one of its occupants. Lodges were an important part of the layout of the Lytham Hall estate, and were built on all approaches to the Hall. Most were demolished many years ago. You can still see Church Lodge, Watchwood Lodge, and the much extended Swiss Lodge. Kendal's Lodge was built of mixed cobble and brick with a slate roof, with attractive drip moulds over the doors and windows. Situated in dense woodland, within the English Heritage Registered parkland but in the ownership of Fairhaven Golf Club, it has survived for many years in a derelict state.

The Club was asked to spare the Lodge, to brick it up perhaps so that future generations could decide on its fate. A plan was developing, supported by John Miller, Director of the Heritage Trust for the North West, to actually move the Lodge on to the Hall grounds. There it would have been part of the heritage interpretation of the estate. Sadly, the club authorities could not wait and in an act of ignorant vandalism the lodge was bulldozed. An important piece of our heritage has been deliberately destroyed by a supposedly responsible organisation without any thought for those who might value it.

Forthcoming Events:

Summer Lunch - 22nd June.

The *Friends* have been invited to a Summer lunch at Church Farmhouse, Ansdell, at the home of David and Marion Coupe. The event will take place on Sunday 22nd June starting 12:00pm and will cost £10 per person.

The lunch will be a buffet, consisting of Coronation chicken and a selection of cold meats and salad followed by a dessert. The ticket cost includes the first glass of wine. This event has been repeated twice before, in 1999 when the weather was absolutely beautiful and last year when it poured down all day. Despite the different weather however, both events were extremely successful and provided all that attended with a lovely afternoon. Church Farm was a part of the Clifton estate from the mid 17th century to the mid 20th century. There will also be an informal plant sale with an opportunity to purchase plants from the garden. You can also bring along cuttings and plants from your own garden, proceeds will go to the '*Friends*'.

Tickets, although restricted due to space limitations, 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 Kath Smith on (01253) 737548).

Recent Events

Snowdrop Sundays

The Snowdrop walks during February appear to be going from strength to strength. This year over 4000 people took the opportunity to take in another fine display. The weather was quite dreadful for the first weekend, which resulted in an attendance of just 75 people. The 2nd weekend had much better weather with the result that over 1400 poured through the gates.

With the weather making such a difference to the attendance it isn't difficult to appreciate

how difficult it must be to gauge demand for the Café. However, with help from the *Friends* and Volunteers group the Hall once again managed to pull through and provided refreshment to many thousands of visitors. The last two Sundays even saw the Café experimentally relocated into the refurbished West wing.

Thanks to all those that helped in the Café, especially those that had to cope with a broken dishwasher on the busiest of days!

Dates for your Diaries

Pride & Prejudice – Sunday 3rd August.

The Illyria Theatre Company in association with Fylde Borough Council will be staging a version of *Pride and Prejudice* at the Hall on Sunday 3rd August. A stage will be erected in front of the Hall for the one performance. See local press for further details. The *Friends* have been asked to help with the catering on the night. If you can volunteer help please contact one of the committee members listed at the back of the newsletter.

Annual General Meeting – 24th September

The *Friends of Lytham Hall* AGM will be held at the Assembly rooms Lytham on Wed 24th September 2003 at 7:30pm.

Autumn Fair – Saturday 4th October.

Assembly rooms Lytham

Evening of Christmas Cheer – Fri. 12th Dec.

Great news! The annual *Friends* “Evening of Christmas Cheer” is returning to the Hall. We will be using the refurbished West wing which can accommodate more people and with better facilities. Exactly how we manage to include the Main hall into the evening is still to be determined, but we are confident that it will prove as successful as previous events.

Memories of the Hall

We are very grateful to Brian Turner for sending in an article he spotted whilst reading an old copy of the *Journal of Horticulture*, dated 14th and 21st Nov. 1872. Not only does

it describe the layout and variety of plants during the time but also gives us an insight to the function of the Mound. It reads:

“Lytham Hall is but a short distance from Lytham; in fact, one of the entrances to the park is from the back of the village, where a fine lodge has been recently built, and a new carriage-road made leading to the mansion. My visit, however, led me another way, and my astonishment was great to find myself so quickly almost shut-in by healthy and vigorous trees, for the mansion and its surroundings seem embedded in plantations of from thirty to fifty years growth, which I was surprised to find in such a healthy condition within a mile of salt water, and that, too, on a coast so remarkable for its storms; yet there they were. My astonishment was increased when I was told by Mr. Shepherd, the gardener, that the level plain on which the mansion stood, including the garden and park, is absolutely 2 or 3 feet below high-water mark that is, the point to which the highest tides rose. Some of your readers will doubtless expect to hear that the whole is a marshy swamp, but it is just the reverse, for vegetation was absolutely suffering from the dry weather, the soil being nearly all sand. Although the tides rose as high as indicated, they were banked out of the park and surrounding country, there being sluice gates to let off the inland water at low tides. The result has been that an extensive tract of valuable land has been judiciously planted on the exposed sides, while other plantations had been elsewhere formed.

Although my visit was too short to allow of my noticing their appearance on the windward, or rather, extreme seaward side, I could see that a kind of willow formed the forlorn hope in that direction, but in the interior of the plantations all kinds of trees were growing, including conifers, and on the lawn Mr. Shepherd pointed out to me more than one Wellingtonia in the most robust health. The contents of the flower-beds were equal to anything of the kind I had seen, the Coleus being very fine.

The mansion is a commanding brick edifice constructed rather for internal comfort than external show. Additions, I believe, were made to it some years ago. Being situated on a level plain, the view from it is, of course, limited; nevertheless, from the upper rooms and even from the lawn, glimpses of the hills and moors of central Lancashire are obtained. The park, rich in herbage and large in size, is almost surrounded by the various plantations that have been reared for shelter and ornament. Pleasure grounds surround the mansion on all sides but the west, where the offices are, and the kitchen garden and forcing houses are to the north; they are surrounded by trees concealing them from the dressed grounds. In the latter were some good examples of bedding, all the ordinary kinds of plants doing well excepting Calceolarias, which, as at some other places, were evidently not at home. The Coleus looked well, and Geraniums, Lobelias, and Verbenas were all that could be wished. Plants remarkable for their foliage were but sparingly introduced.

The parterre immediately adjoining the house, and another in a secluded corner, were both gay with floral beauty. One feature in the grounds ought not to be omitted - namely, a mound of considerable size and elevation, with a pathway ascending spirally to the top, where there is an ornamental summer-house, whence beautiful views all round can be obtained. Eastward the waving corn and rich grassy plains that lie between Lytham and Preston could be distinctly seen; to the south the broad estuary of the Ribble, with the town of Southport on its southern shore, was clearly shown, as was also the channel to the westward; while northward the trees nearly shut out the view. The formation of this mound and its surmounting must have been a rather formidable undertaking, where material for such work was not to be had from a neighbouring elevation, but they add greatly to the interest attached to such a place, and give relief to the eye that may be weary of gazing on a flat surface.

Walks through the wood connect the mansion and the adjoining pleasure ground with the kitchen garden, which, though small, is surrounded by good walls, with broad outside slips on all sides but that next the dressed ground. The space being too confined to allow of the introduction of flowers, a very pretty effect was produced by grouping conical masses of Scarlet Runner Beans between the newly-planted pyramid-trained fruit trees that lined the sides of the main central walk. The plan was this: -

A number of ordinary Scarlet Runner stakes of 8 feet long or thereabouts were set in a circle a yard or so in diameter, and their tops all tied to a wire hoop of, perhaps, less than a foot in diameter, about a dozen such stakes forming a cone. Against these cones the Scarlet Runners were planted, and at the time of my visit they looked well, alternating as they did with a fruit tree that was intended to assume the same shape.

Vegetables of most kinds were thriving, but Mr. Shepherd said that last year, which was dry, was not favourable to vegetable crops, but that with plenty of rain everything throve, especially root crops. The cabbage tribe does not succeed so well as some others, but stands this winter better than at many places, and some fruit trees are evidently not at home, while others are all that could be desired.

In a range of houses good black grapes were produced in abundance, but Muscats, though good also, were evidently in want of a firmer soil. I was afterwards told by a gardener in the same country, that although the fine, dark-coloured, sandy soil of west Lancashire produces excellent grapes for a short time, it soon wears out. Lytham is an extreme case; the soil is in a great measure sand, and has evidently at some time been overflowed by the sea; now it is very dry. However, good peaches are produced, and most kinds of vegetables are also good, but lettuce and the like become scarce during dry weather. Withal, the ease with which such a soil may be worked in all weathers is not without its

advantages, and I have no doubt many wish they had a portion of it in exchange for as much stiff land.

By the proprietor of Lytham Hall, an out-of-the-way fishing village has been transformed into a fashionable watering place, and the sandy plains of an uninteresting coast into park and pleasure grounds, thus offering an example of how much well directed skill and perseverance can accomplish”.

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.

Thanks Stanley!

Thanks go to Stanley Brown who, not for the first time, has donated £20 to the *Friends of Lytham Hall* from a fee he received as guest speaker with the Ladies of Lytham United Reform Church.

Membership

Thanks to all those who have responded to our continual pleas for membership renewal. We have finally made it past last year's membership total. It goes to show that constant nagging does always pay off. Having said that, membership paid by standing order does save an awful lot of time and trouble and is easily available to all *Friends* simply by contacting the Membership Secretary.

Membership renewals will be individually sent to existing members. However, because we are aware that the circulation of the newsletter reaches a wider readership than the current membership, an application form for new members is attached.

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

Prizes Please!

The *Friends* need Raffle prizes to support

their events. If you have anything that might do i.e. an unwanted present or perhaps a box of chocolates you know you shouldn't eat, then please think about donating them to the *Friends of Lytham Hall*. A phone call to any of the committee listed at the end of the newsletter is all that is required.

Who said that!

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

In days gone by, people with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food, causing lead poisoning and death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes knock them out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up - hence the custom of holding a "wake."

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or "upper crust."

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