

Friends of Lytham Hall

Newsletter

Registered Charity No: 1069442

Dec 2003

Issue 30

The Friends of Lytham Hall AGM on 24th Sept. was attended by over 40 people and the chairman Mrs Elizabeth Guffogg made the following statement on the previous year:

As you know the Hall has been closed since Oct. 2001 which has meant the Friends have been unable to hold any events there this year. HTNW are however still taking bookings for weddings and group tours. The recently renovated West Wing has proved an extremely popular venue for weddings.

*The Hall was opened to the public for the snowdrop walks in Feb. of this year, which were hugely successful. On the last 2 Sundays they has over 1000 visitors through the gates. The friends were asked, along with the Heritage Group to provide volunteers to run the tea room. I would like to thank all members of the friends who gave up their time to help on what proved to be a very busy day! It is this kind of activity where the Friends can really prove their worth. This was also demonstrated to great effect in August of this year for the outdoor production of *Pride and Prejudice* held at the Hall. The Friends were asked by Fylde Borough Council to provide volunteers to be on the gate and to serve refreshments during the performance.*

This year saw the launch of the Friends website at www.lythamhall.org Several people have worked hard to make this possible in particular Fred Moor who designed the site and John Bentham who is hosting it for us. We have tried to make the site as informative as possible and hope members of the Friends will use it to keep up to date with our activities. It has been funded through a very generous donation from a member of the Friends.

The Friends have continued to hold fund raising events throughout the year. We held a successful Summer Lunch in June and an

Autumn Fair at which Eleanor's weight kept everybody guessing!

Our Christmas event was held at Green Drive Golf Club at which we had a very enjoyable evening. We are very pleased to be holding this year's event back at the Hall and we are hoping to make it a real celebration. Tickets are already sold out.

The much heralded Lottery Bid of which the Clifton Collection forms part was submitted in May of this year.

The total cost of the project is estimated at £4.7m of which 75% i.e. £3.8m is being sought from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The remaining 25% is being made up from partnership from other bodies e.g. National Arts Collections Fund, Lancashire Tourism Partnership, Lancashire Environmental fund etc. the bid does not include all items from the collection. The Friends funds are at present earmarked in case the final award does not include some items that the Friends should be purchased. A final decision on the bid is not expected until 2005.

We have offered the sum of £1000 to Heritage Trust for the North West to put towards a restoration project at the Hall. As yet we have had no take-up on this offer although we are actively pursuing it.

All our efforts are always very generously supported by our membership for which the committee would like to pass on their thanks. The Charity has been the beneficiary of generous donations from various individuals and increasing numbers of the membership are taking advantage of the standing orders and Gift Aid schemes. We have changed the way we send out membership renewals this year, which has resulted in an increase in our membership numbers.

On a personal note I would like to thank the members of the Committee who have worked

so hard over the year to keep the Friends going. In particular our Treasurer Kay Hopper who has decided to resign that position this year. Keeping track of the finances particularly when gift aid, memberships and covenants are involved is not an easy job and I would like to thank Kay for her commitment to the task.

Finally as I have said before the Friends could not function without you the membership and I would like to thank you all for your continued support throughout the year.

Forthcoming Events:

Evening of Christmas Cheer – Fri. 12th Dec. The Friends “Evening of Christmas Cheer” sold-out within a week of going on sale. Our apologies go to all those who unsuccessfully applied for tickets and can only suggest that next year people apply for tickets at the earliest opportunity.

Snowdrop Sundays - 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th Feb. & 7th March 2004

We are pleased to announce that once again Lytham Hall will be hosting its annual Snowdrop walks. There will be five special days for the Snowdrops in 2004 – The last four Sundays in February and the first Sunday in March.

Parking in the grounds will be limited to disabled drivers only. All other vehicles can be parked in the AXA car park adjacent to the Main Gates on Ballam road. Benches will be dotted along the driveway to allow respite. Stout shoes are recommended and dogs, although welcome, must be kept on a leash.

Entrance to the grounds will start at 11:00am with last entry at 3:30pm. The cost this year has increased to £2.00 for Adults, but has remained at 50p for Children. Family tickets are also available for £5, which admit 2 adults & up to 3 children. The tea-room will also be open.

Volunteers may be needed to help out in the tea-room. If anyone is willing to make

themselves available for 2 hours or so on any of the Sundays, please ring the office on 736652.

Annual General Meeting – 24th September
The Friends of Lytham Hall AGM was held at the Assembly rooms Lytham on Wed 24th September.

The minutes of the previous AGM were read and accepted with no matters arising.

After the Chairman’s report Kay Hopper presented her last Treasurers report, the main features of which were the reclaiming of a staggering £484 from the Inland Revenue of Gift Aid and the huge increase on deposited income due to the COIF (charities) deposit account. Total funds held on the 31st May 2003 were £29,761.

Three members of the committee, Pamela Greenhill, Elizabeth Guffogg and Marilyn Smith were re-elected unopposed. It was announced that Zoe Rushworth would be taking over as Treasurer.

Among other questions from the floor Mr E Hornby asked about the entrance to the Estate. The Chairman explained that the idea of an additional entrance had been abandoned. Coach parties will have to book in advance and will be advised of the height and width restrictions of the entrance.

The Friends President Mr David Coupe ended the meeting by expressing thanks to the Chairman and committee for their ongoing efforts. He also told of his frustration at the slow progress at the Hall but relief that the Lottery bid has been submitted.

Directly following the meeting Ann Pinder, Custodian and Events organiser at the Hall gave an update on progress at the Hall, and followed with a slide show of previously unseen photos of the Clifton family. She reported that:

Dr Sam Johnson the operations manager at the Hall has left to take up a position at St

Martins College Lancaster. This is a blow to the Hall as Dr Johnson & the Heritage Trust for the North West were busy planning events for 2004 and his departure will now restrict the ability of the Hall to open to the public. Changes in progress within funding bodies have created some uncertainty and the Trust is waiting to see the outcome of these changes, possibly in April 2004, before considering further staffing.

Some tree work has commenced to fell and make safe dangerous trees in the grounds. This is part of the plan to establish a Country Park at Lytham Hall.

Anne then gave a very interesting slide show of old photographs of John Talbot nearly all of which had not been seen before. The most interesting of which was one of him and five other men somewhere in Japan in 1903 with twenty Geishas for company!

The source of these new photos was from a collection on long term loan to HTNW from Peter De Vere Beauclark Dewer and his Sister Gillian whose Mother was a Niece of Violet Clifton. (Violet's maiden name was Beauclark) He had contacted Ann and informed her that he had five boxes of papers & letters of Violet Clifton that his Mother had collected.

They were however with his Sister Gillian in Dorset. Not to be deterred, Ann persuaded husband Tony to indulge in a weekend away close to where they could pick up the collection. However, they were stunned when the five boxes turned into 5 trunks! After a lot of grunting and straining Ann & Tony just about managed to squeeze all five trunks into their car and make it home. Ann now has the challenge of sorting through all five trunks. However, sorting and categorising information of this volume requires no small amount of expertise and, to ensure she gets it right Ann has enrolled, with blessing and funding from Heritage Trust for the North West, on a specialist archiving course with Liverpool University. We wish her well with

the task and she has promised to keep us informed of any interesting finds.

Recent Events

Autumn Fair – Saturday 4th October.

The Friends Autumn Fair took place on Sat. 4th November at the Assembly Rooms, Lytham raising £295.

Thanks go to everyone who turned out. Special thanks go to all those who donated prizes and articles for sale, in particular Pam & Charlie Greenhill who once again provided some wonderful potted pink & white Cyclamen. Thanks also to all those that helped on the day, and finally the ever-popular Tom Eccles who turned out once again to support the cause by signing Christmas cards.

Memories of the Hall

It is a while since we printed the first part of the memories of Betty Kershaw who worked at the Hall during the War.

Betty went to work at the Hall following her call-up in 1942, when she was 19 years old, and stayed until 1946. She was initially trained at St Annes (War memorial) Hospital before moving onto the Hall, which was then an Army convalescence Hospital - it was later upgraded to an auxiliary Military Hospital. She remembers the following:

- ♥ A Searchlight battery situated just inside the main gates.
- ♥ Regular outbreaks of rats and the rat-killer who came to keep the numbers down.
- ♥ The kindness of Lillian Clifton whose compassion for Gamekeeper Smith, who had developed a brain tumour, stretched to sending regular baskets of food to him and his wife, and also the family car to allow him day trips out.
- ♥ Nurses not being allowed to wear 'Mufti' (civilian dress). For outdoor dress they had a special outdoor uniform.

- ♥ All the sad occasions as there was always someone losing a loved one to the war. Betty's Fiancée, a RAF pilot, was unfortunately killed during the war.
- ♥ George Cousins, the Handy man, talking of Lillian riding a horse into the Hall and up the main staircase.
- ♥ That all the food produced on Home Farm had to go to the Ministry of food for distribution. The Commandant once had a pig killed as a treat for the staff and inmates but was snatched on and she received a hefty fine.
- ♥ That Betty was detailed to pick up Lady Louis Mountbatton, who was visiting Lytham Hall for an inspection. Using the estate car she unfortunately caught a protruding object and ripped the car door off – she was not the flavour of the month.
- ♥ The commandant taking the nurses to the Opera house to see the Gang Show starring a Ralph Reader.
- ♥ That Nurses and servicemen were allowed free entry to the 'Palace' picture house in Lytham.
- ♥ The stories of ghosts in the Hall and the patients who used to rattle the screens to scare the nurses.
- ♥ October 1943 and the euphoria of El Alamein – the first victory in battle.
- ♥ Victory in Japan was celebrated by a day on the Pleasure Beach.

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.

Lytham Hall

BOXING DAY ON THE ICE, 1870

We are once again grateful to Brian Turner for sending in an article he spotted in an old copy of the Lytham & Kirkham Times, 28 Dec. 1870:

“To the many other attractions which Lytham possesses, the keen frost of the past few days has contributed another in the shape of excellent and safe skating, and this amusement has been largely indulged in. The pools in the hills have been thronged with visitors, especially on Monday last, the day after Christmas Day, which was observed as a general holiday all the places of business being closed, and the weather being remarkably bright, clear, and bracing.

The great point of attraction, however, was the large sheet of water near The Hall, which by the kind permission of J. Talbot Clifton, Esq., was available for skating. Here the ice had not been touched from the commencement of the frost and it presented a splendid sheet free from all obstructions and literally as smooth as glass.

In the course of the day there were hundreds of persons present, and the pleasure of the scene was very greatly enhanced by the number of ladies who were assembled, many of whom were upon the ice and displayed various degrees of proficiency from the learner to the accomplished skater. Amongst the ladies who skated we noticed Mrs. T. H. Clifton, the Misses Ormerod, the Misses Jervis, Miss Verity, Miss Rigby, Mrs. Beaumont, (Longridge), Miss Fair, the Misses Openshaw, (Bury), Miss Wartenberg, Miss Shum Storey, Miss Baron, Miss Knowles (Bolton), Miss M. Park, Miss Myres, (Manchester), Miss Naples, Miss Brown, etc.

During the day Mrs. Clifton visited the animated scene, and amongst the gentlemen present were J. Talbot Clifton, Esq., A. Wykeham Clifton, Esq., and T. H. Clifton, Esq. Some of the gentlemen skaters present from Lytham had evidently come with the intention of making a day of it, as one group

was seen much enjoying a large pie of savoury smell - a pie certainly not extemporized on the spot, but one evidently previously prepared in anticipation of the day's campaign on the ice. All present enjoyed themselves in no ordinary degree.

Yesterday the ice was swept and in the morning and afternoon a considerable number of ladies and gentlemen again enjoyed a few hours skating. The cold during the past six or seven days has been intense. Remembering that 32 degrees is the freezing point, we may add that during Wednesday night last the mercury was down at 25, on Thursday night at 15, and on Friday night at 10."

The Georgian Group

The Summer issue of the 'The Georgian' magazine is still available for members to read. It and previous editions can be reserved by phoning John Martin. The only drawback is that anything borrowed must be collected and returned by the borrower. Alternatively you can access their very interesting web-site at www.heritage.co.uk/georgian.

Who said that!

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

Houses in the C15 had thatched roofs-thick straw-piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the dogs, cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof-hence the saying "It's raining cats and dogs."

There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could really mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That's how canopy beds came into existence.

The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had

something other than dirt, hence the saying "dirt poor."

The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on the floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they kept adding more thresh until when you opened the door it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entranceway-hence, a "thresh hold."

Volunteer Required

We still have a requirement for a Postie for one of our rounds – Area E. This is a compact but sizeable round, which we have divided into two. It is based around Lytham Town centre.

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

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
Zoe Rushworth, Treasurer: (01253) 731538
John Martin, Newsletter: (01253) 728186
P. Hamilton, Membership: (01253) 736857
Marion Coupe, Events: (01253) 733563
Ann Pinder, Hall Bookings: (01253) 736652