



“Friends of Lytham Hall”

Newsletter

Number 5

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Public queries about who now runs Lytham Hall prompted the following notes. The Hall is owned by Lytham Town Trust Limited as custodians for the benefit of the local community and Nation. The Town Trust is a registered charity whose first project was the Lytham Assembly Rooms. The Hall is managed by Lancashire Heritage Trust under a contract with the Town Trust. A warden, Mrs Pinder, has recently been appointed and we wish her a happy and successful association with Lytham Hall.

The *Friends of Lytham Hall* was set up as a support group to help the Town Trust in its campaign to purchase Lytham Hall. Fund raising and mobilisation of local support began in the spring of 1996. The Lytham St. Anne's Express supported our aims wholeheartedly and we soon accrued a mailing list of over 200. As you are aware, British Aerospace stepped in at the eleventh hour last July with a major donation sufficient to fund the purchase of the Hall. The entire contents of the Hall were also offered for sale separately by Guardian Assurance and the Town Trust's option to buy them runs until February 1998.

Founding members of the *Friends* included Liz Guffogg, Marion Coupe, Kath Smith and Pauline Clark who have worked hard to run the Appeal Office at the Assembly Rooms. From there we have fielded all sorts of enquiries particularly those about weddings at the Hall. Our aim was to encourage and increase the huge enthusiasm for the Hall which already existed. This, however, was seen as a 'holding operation' until staff were appointed at the Hall. With the appointment of the warden we can now ease the load on our long-suffering volunteers and reduce the office 'open' hours to two periods each week; although the office will remain in use at other times. The Hall is registered for civil weddings and this was seen as an important potential source of revenue which we hope will continue to be promoted.

The committee of the *Friends* have decided that it is best for the *Friends* to be constituted as a separate charity and this process is underway. It will ensure that all the money we raise will go towards the appeal to buy the entire contents of the Hall and for other agreed specific purposes. Money can be donated to the *Friends* taking advantage of tax concessions.

The Hall having been purchased the *Friends* short term commitment is to assist the Town Trust in the vitally important task of raising the funds required to purchase the entire contents of the house - these being as important as the acquisition of the Hall itself.

The *Friends* long term commitment is to ensure that the Hall its contents and its grounds are in use as an art gallery, museum, visitor centre and providing other amenities of a similar character for the benefit of the local community and the Nation.

Many offers of practical help have been received which are much appreciated.

Recent events

Guests gained an unexpected pleasure with the announcement that His Royal Highness, the Prince Andrew, would attend the *Friends' Celebration Dinner* at the Hall hosted by the Mayor and Mayoress of Fylde on the 2nd May. The new Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire, Lord Shuttleworth, together with Lady Shuttleworth joined the distinguished guest list. Prince Andrew talked to guests before the dinner and entertained everyone later with an amusing speech. Over eighty guests enjoyed the event, held on a beautiful warm evening, when a champagne reception and a delicious meal served in our lovely Hall helped to create a memorable occasion. Margaret Race organised the dinner which made £1,600 for the *Friends'* funds as well as attracting donations.

On Thursday 8th May **Dr. Alan Crosby** talked to a large audience in the Assembly Rooms. In his wonderful style Alan described the Clifton family from its origins almost a thousand years ago. Although early Cliftons were knighted and held public office the family generally kept a 'low profile' to avoid the persecution which threatened from their Catholic allegiance. In Alan's view it was the end of that persecution and the desire to display their wealth which led to the building of the present Lytham Hall. He described the last years of increasing Clifton eccentricity leading to the break-up and sale of the estate by 1963. Stanley Brown expressed the views of an appreciative audience in his thanks to Alan and the evening concluded with coffee and biscuits having raised £270 for the funds.

The organisation of the 26th May **Open Day** went very smoothly and all the volunteers enjoyed their day. Some, who had helped on previous open days as members of Lytham Heritage Group or the Civic Society, had experience already but most were new. Everyone managed wonderfully and it helped greatly having the "beaters' room" as a base for the stewards. We also made tea in the "great-grandfather tape store" building which acted as a remote base to supply the car parking and gate stewards! The days leading up to the event had seen many volunteers making and placing signs, stocking 'fridges and freezers and all the myriad tasks necessary in such an undertaking. Even at eleven o'clock on the evening before, Karl Oyston Farms could be seen giving a final mow to the field they had lent as a car park. As the great day arrived Pemberton Dairies delivered the free milk they had donated and the first of three shifts of stewards arrived for their final briefings and duties.

OPEN DAY - 'An Army of Volunteers' (a view from Kath Smith)

Just to say, "Thank you for all your help and for making the day such a success", does not do justice to the efforts of all the volunteers involved with the first open day at the Hall since it was acquired from Guardian. 'Challenge Anneka' had nothing on this! Preparations, of course, had been going on for months but it was amazing to witness the coming together of all the plans.

The night before I arrived at the Hall to find the members of the Lytham St. Anne's Flower Club armed with greenery and containers ready and waiting for delivery of flowers donated by Ashtons (well worth waiting for). They were soon joined by the Fylde Croquet Club who set about mowing and measuring, preparing their lawn in front of the Hall.

Representatives from local organisations - Civic Society, Heritage Group, Art Society - set up their displays in the Hall. 'Friends of Lytham Hall' volunteers arrived to help wherever they were required (a multi-talented group of people) setting up stalls, moving tables, fetching

and carrying. Meanwhile beautiful flower arrangements appeared in every room.

The Catering Committee arrived with stacks of loaned crockery and rapidly transformed the old kitchen into a pretty period tea room; obviously the result of many months of serious planning. Under the leadership of Pam Greenhill, Meg Hargreaves, and Pauline Hamilton and the professional help of Sue Jones they worked a miracle. Sue had made hundreds of scones and *Friends* contributed many cakes. The result was a profit of over £600. Previously they had donned rubber gloves and cleaned this room from top to bottom! Tables and chairs arrived from St. Joseph's church to fill the rear courtyard. Plant troughs and potted plants were loaned by Charlie Greenhill and Barton Grange Landscapes to adorn the courtyard and the exterior of the Hall. I could only look on in awe as the place buzzed with such activity.

Vast numbers of stewards gave up their Bank Holiday to help at the Hall, inside and out and many of them stayed all day. The groundsman, Paul Gibson, gave up his day off to help. Tom and Mary Eccles spent the whole day in the Ballroom signing, selling and taking orders for Christmas cards, taken from Tom's wonderful water-colour original, and are donating the proceeds to *Friends of Lytham Hall*. Volunteers from Lytham St. Anne's High School spent the day helping wherever needed.

The Fylde Coast Cloggers waived their fee and their band entertained the customers as they enjoyed tea and cakes in the courtyard. John Ardern loaned the bouncy castle - as usual a great favourite with the children. Extra interest was added at the front of the Hall by classic cars owned by Eric Watkiss for the occasion. Rita Midgely organised the raffle which made over £270 and we are most grateful for the prizes donated by *Friends*. Rowland Kirkman's duties prevented him from even seeing the Hall as he was occupied organising the car parking!

What really impressed me on this day was the amount of feeling all these people have for the Hall and the Clifton Collection. It was thrilling to see so many societies, groups and generations working together with such enthusiasm and goodwill. It was a happy day indeed, both for the Hall and the community.

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Let's say it again - the *Friends of Lytham Hall* are very grateful for the support of Ashtons Nurseries, Bob Ratcliffe and his team of Special Constables of the Lancashire Police, Fylde Croquet Club, Guardian Assurance, John Ardern Estate Agents, Karl Oyston Farms, The Lytham St Anne's Art Society, Lytham St Anne's Flower Club, Lytham Heritage Group, Lytham St. Anne's Civic Society, Lytham St. Anne's High School, Pemberton Dairies, The Fylde Coast Cloggers, The British Red Cross and many others.

The open day raised in excess of £4,500.00. The event was successful not simply in financial terms but also in raising awareness of the responsibility and opportunity which has devolved upon our local community in the acquisition of the Hall.

St. John's Court sheltered housing, at Warton Street, Lytham, having already supported the *Friends of Lytham Hall* Open Day, invited the *Friends* to sell memorabilia and merchandise at their *Treasured Things* event held on 5th June. This was an antiques valuation afternoon followed in the evening by a talk on the Hall by Debbie Roberts. This kind invitation and hospitality both allowed us an enjoyable day and added a further £250 to the *Friends* funds.

Lytham Hall Park school held its 10th **Georgian Day** at the Hall this month. Over the

years many children have enjoyed this opportunity to learn something of Georgian life in a large country house by dressing the part and living out the various social roles in the place. The school has a portfolio of Georgian music and holds a concert for parents in the afternoon. They are bringing their own chairs and crockery this time however!

This really is one of the best uses for the Hall enabling young people to appreciate the singularity of the place and to learn about the past in an enjoyable way.

Forthcoming events:

The Open Day was the last of the *Friends* events using the Hall currently agreed by Lytham Town Trust. There are plenty of ideas for more and we hope to have these approved in due course. Meanwhile we need volunteers to run a stall on **Club Day 28th June**, when we will be selling Lytham Hall memorabilia and merchandise. Stringer's have very kindly offered us space under their canopy in the centre of Lytham.

A barbecue will be held on **17th August** at Church Farm House, Commonsides, Ansdell, courtesy of David and Marion Coupe. ~~Food and~~ a glass of wine will cost £7.00 per head. The numbers are limited so book early! Help with this event will be appreciated.

Friends of Lytham Hall:

Membership numbers are now up to 245 and increasing almost daily. The total funds raised by the *Friends* has now passed £16,000. The office at the Assembly Rooms is manned by volunteers and is now manned on Tuesdays from 10.00am to 12.00 and Thursdays from 2.00pm to 4.00pm. Please feel free to drop in with ideas/offers of help, to buy memorabilia or merchandise, or just for an update on our progress. Prices of our goods are:-

Christmas cards (specially produced from an original water-colour by Tom Eccles) £1.25 each or £1.00 each for orders of 25 or more. Overprinting by arrangement.

Lytham Hall mugs	£3.50.
Booklets of the Hall	£1.50.
Fudge with picture of Hall	£1.50.
Teddy Bears (volunteers welcome to dress these up).	£1.50 and £1.00
Pens	£1.00.
Postcards, Rock (Hall right through!), Cut-out model of Hall	50p.

Many doubted that the community would be successful in its endeavours to buy the Hall. We have proved them wrong! Huge but exciting and entirely attainable challenges now lie ahead. We look forward to an ever growing membership comprised of men and women of all ages and drawn from all sectors of our wider community. You are already a *Friend*. Please encourage others to become *Friends* we can only succeed with the support and active involvement of all people who share our aims.

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