



# Friends of Lytham Hall Newsletter

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[www.friendsoflythamhall.org.uk](http://www.friendsoflythamhall.org.uk)  
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*As covid restrictions ease and visitors return to the Hall and parkland, life begins to feel a little more normal. Hall tours have resumed and events such as the outdoor theatre productions and music festival can go ahead providing essential income to the Hall. The Parterre Garden, with Diana the Huntress at the centre, is looking very elegant after its makeover.*

## Continuing our Recruitment Drive

Having been unable to carry out our usual fundraising activities and events over the last year and a half, the Friends has become more dependent on income from membership subscriptions. So, we invested in some high visibility vests printed with the 'Friends of Lytham Hall' and our logo, and ran a Spring Bank holiday



recruitment drive. Display boards were set up showing projects we have helped to fund over the years and, armed with our membership leaflets we talked to visitors about the Hall and the work of the Friends.

We have been delighted with the response and the membership numbers have shown a steady increase.

Even better, many of the new members have chosen to become Patrons.

We will definitely be doing this more often.



## Friends of Lytham Hall Membership

Membership fees: £15 - Single Membership £20 - Joint Membership £50 - Patron

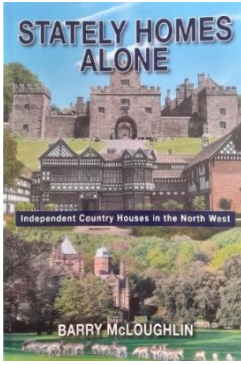
If you know of anyone who may like to join us, or would like to give a membership as a gift, you will find membership forms on the Friends' website or in the Bookshop at the Hall.

## Historic England Heritage 'Buildings at Risk' Register.

The Hall has been on the 'Buildings at Risk' register for many years due to concerns with the roof, rainwater goods and electrical system. Following repairs and improvements carried out over recent years, the Hall is to be taken off the register. This is great news and the Trustees and Management expressed their gratitude for all the hard work and support from various bodies, including other charities for helping to achieve this important milestone.

Now ongoing support is vital to keep the Hall in a good state of repair, ensuring that it stays off the register.

## **Stately Homes Alone – Independent Country Houses in the North West**



Lytham Hall features in a new book, by Barry McLoughlin. Covering Lancashire, Cheshire and Cumbria, the book contains chapters on 15 stately homes, one castle, two neo-classical houses and one building which has vanished altogether. All are independently run by owner families or trusts and local authorities. Ranging from the high-profile to the smaller and quirkier properties, they all have a story to tell. Learn about their history, owners, gardens and ghosts as well as their restoration and how to visit them.

**Copies can be purchased from the Friends of Lytham Hall (£12.50).  
All profits will go towards the continuing restoration of the Hall.**

**Email: <meghargreaves@aol.com> to arrange free local delivery, or postage.**

## **Zoom Talks for Members**

Our monthly evening 'Zoom Talks' cover a range of topics connected to the Hall, its history and the Clifton family.

In June, Greg Anderton from the 'Leafy Lytham Garden Hub', gave us a fascinating insight into traditional cottage gardens and how to create cottage garden borders. There were some lovely illustrations and suggestions for plants which can be used to give a more informal garden style.



This month, David Hoyle of Lytham Heritage Group, gave us a glimpse into the Hall's past through a selection of early photographs and etchings from the archives. The discussions which took place after his talk highlighted the importance of labelling our photographs, and concern that photos today are increasingly stored on our mobile phones rather than printed for future generations to see.

**Still to come are the following talks:**

**August 18<sup>th</sup> - Thomas Hewitt - 'John Clifton, Lytham's Regency Squire'**

**September 15<sup>th</sup> - Peter Watson - 'Seven Long Years' The Marriage of Harry and Lillian Clifton'**

**October 20<sup>th</sup> - John Hornyak - 'The Seasons at Lytham Hall'**

**November 17<sup>th</sup> - Hugh Clifton - 'Fifty Items of Clifton Family History and their Stories'**

**December 15<sup>th</sup> - Austin Holmes - 'John Carr'**

*An email with details of each talk, with a Zoom link will be sent to members before each event.*



## **The Friends' Bookshop**



Don't forget to visit our bookshop opposite the Tearooms in the West Wing.

The shop is very popular with visitors to the Hall, and runs on an honesty box basis.

**We are now able to accept donations of good-quality paperback fiction, children's picture books and non-fiction - such as History/ Art / Local interest.**

All proceeds from the bookshop go to Lytham Hall projects.

Please put your book donations in the box to the right of the main book case.

## **Memories of Lytham Hall**

*I wonder if anyone was puzzled by the account in last month's Newsletter of the Clifton family employing a sixteen-year-old to help look after their children in the early 1940s.*

*The Cliftons in residence at that time were Lillian and Harry Clifton who had no children.*

*I presume it would not have been "children" but rather one child for whom Peggy Plowe was employed to teach singing and pianoforte in the early 1940's.*

*Although Lillian and Harry Clifton had no children, Lillian Clifton had a daughter from her first marriage, Angelica Griswold, who would have been about 11 in 1940. She seems to have lived principally with her father in Boston, USA, but from time to time came across to England by transatlantic liner with her governess.*

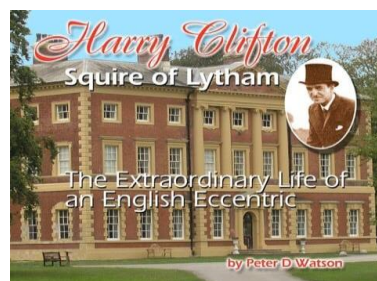
*The most notable occasion was when she came to be at her mother's bedside when Lillian was recovering from her fall from a dressing room window in 1939. An account of Angelica's arrival at Lytham Hall was published in a local newspaper as part of the news coverage following Lillian's much publicised accident.*

*Peter D Watson*

### **Harry Clifton Squire of Lytham – The Extraordinary Life of an English Eccentric.**

This booklet by Peter Watson is available for £7.50 from the Friends via email to [friends@friendsoflythamhall.org.uk](mailto:friends@friendsoflythamhall.org.uk), free local delivery service or by post at £2.50 p&p.

It can also be purchased from Lytham Hall and from Plackitt and Booth bookshop in Lytham.



## **Memories Revisited**

Looking back on almost 25 years of Friends' Newsletters, I realised that we have a wealth of first-hand accounts of experiences of the Hall's colourful past. I have started to collect these reminiscences together and feel they should be shared with our newer members. I'm sure our more long-standing members will enjoy hearing some of them again too:

### **The Lytham Hall Bear**

Bob Howarth worked as a decorator at the Hall around 1961. Whilst there Mrs Violet Clifton presented him with a signed souvenir brochure of the Hall which had been compiled using articles from Country Life Magazine, dated July 21st & 28th 1960. Whilst there he also witnessed the visit of artist L. S. Lowry to the Hall. [Lowry painted and sketched several images of Lytham]

Bob also remembers, as a boy, the fascination of the Hall and its grounds - creeping in and exploring as much of the grounds as he could whilst trying desperately not to be caught by the Gamekeeper and the Gardeners. On one occasion he managed to pluck up courage to sneak into the stable yard and open one of the doors. Imagine his surprise when instead of a horse he came upon a huge bear (stuffed of course) rearing up and apparently about to lunge at him!

Well, around he turned and fled out of the grounds his feet not touching the ground, all the while quite convinced that the Bear was right behind him. It was many weeks before young Bob plucked up the courage to return to the Hall. His explanation is that his little encounter took place during the war, during which time the west wing of the Hall was being used as a convalescent hospital for servicemen. Because of this everything that had been kept in the west wing had to be stored in the stables.



*I imagine the bear would be similar to Bill the Bear at Towneley Hall, Burnley*

## Entertaining the Troops

In 1940 Lytham Hall's west wing was converted into a convalescent home for wounded members of the armed forces. Miss Alicia Cottrell wrote to tell us of one of the occasions she visited the Hall during the war. She was one of the members of a unit that called themselves "The Go To It Unit" which used to entertain members of the armed forces. One day they were entertaining at the Hall,



*The opening of the convalescent home in 1940*

when one of the Soldiers who had already seen them perform at the training camp at Squires Gate (the site of the demolished Pontins Holiday Camp) called out for Alicia to do the Clog Dance to the 'Lassie from Lancashire'. When she replied she hadn't brought her music or costume with her, the Soldier asked her to do it as she was and said that the audience would whistle the tune. So, borrowing a headscarf and an apron from one of the nurses, she danced the "Lancashire Clog Dance" to a whistling audience and, as they say 'the show went on'.



## Lytham Hall Open Air Theatre 2021



The outdoor theatre productions have been very popular so far this summer and there are three more plays to come:

**The Further Adventures of Dr. Dolittle – Friday 13<sup>th</sup> August at 6.00pm, Illyria.**

**Much Ado About Nothing – Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> August at 6pm, Illyria.**

**H.M.S Pinafore – Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> August at 6.00pm, Illyria.**

**Tickets are available online now at <[www.lythamhall.org.uk](http://www.lythamhall.org.uk)>**

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