



# Friends of Lytham Hall Newsletter

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[www.friendsoflythamhall.org.uk](http://www.friendsoflythamhall.org.uk)  
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*The Friends of Lytham Hall AGM was held on October 20<sup>th</sup> at the Hall. It was good to see some new faces there. The Chairman's Report is included in this Newsletter. On completion of the business part of the meeting, Peter Anthony [General Manager at the Hall] gave an update on the progress of the many projects at the Hall and Parkland.*



## Friends Support the Outdoor Theatre

This year's outdoor theatre programme of six plays, organised by Julian Wilde, was the most successful yet. For the first time, every production was accompanied by warm, sunny weather and large audiences.

The £23,000 raised over the six evenings will help fund the redecoration of the grand staircase at the Hall.

The Friends provided a refreshment stall at each event, selling hot and cold drinks and snacks. Thanks to the efforts of our happy band of volunteers, over £1,000 was raised for our funds.

## Treasure Hunting at Lytham Hall



As the number of visitors to the Hall continue to increase, there is a real need for an overflow car park. The ideal place for this is the paddock, in front of the inner gate. The plan is to use a type of 'Groundtrax' system which strengthens the surface and allows the grass to grow through, so the area will always look green.

A condition for obtaining planning permission for the build is that there would be an archaeological survey before any work starts. The Friends of Lytham Hall offered to fund the majority of the survey as it would be an educational exercise involving volunteers, which falls in line with the Friends' constitution.

In addition to the dig site on the Paddock, three trenches were dug on the South Lawn. One was near the Mount, where the foundations of the end of the Paradise Wall were soon uncovered. Two long trenches were dug near the middle of the lawn. The only finds were old bricks and broken pottery but everyone enjoyed the experience. It is hoped there will be further opportunities to dig next year.



There have been other digs at the Hall, one in 2013 exploring the gardens and the mount/ icehouse, and another in 2015 in the inner courtyard. The 2015 dig, undertaken by Salford University, was commissioned by HTNW in the hope of finding evidence of the Benedictine Priory and Jacobean Hall. Lots of oyster shells were found under the paving along with pottery sherds and, the most exciting find, a late Cistercian ware double-handled cup from the 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Friends of Lytham Hall Chairman's Report 24/25**

*The Halloween and Easter Bunny events were our main source of income in 2024/2025. Whilst a clear success, the FOLH committee reviewed the lessons learned from the Halloween event [health and safety, insurance, volunteer availability, ticket capacity etc.] and have concluded that this event is getting to a scale/ complexity that its continued success would be better ensured if the event were to be run by the Lytham Hall team. The Friends will continue to organise the Easter Bunny Family Fun Day.*

*The success of the Friends' events depends on the support of volunteers from the Friends, the wider Lytham Hall volunteer group and the support of the Hall management team, and the committee would like to acknowledge their appreciation of this. We would also like to express our thanks and sincere appreciation to Meg Hargreaves who has led the organisation of both Halloween and Easter events, and whose hard work and dedication has been at the heart of their success for many years.*

*The second-hand Bookshop, adjacent to the Café, continues to go from strength to strength, generating just over £9,000 in this financial year. As we move forward with the loss of income from Halloween, the Bookshop will become our primary source of fundraising. The Committee would like to acknowledge the dedication and commitment of our bookshop team, supported by Janet Potheary from the Lytham Hall Staff. Together, they have over the course of this year, made several improvements to the bookshop area, the stock and presentation, which is clearly reflected in the increased weekly takings. We were pleased to welcome Gillian Duxbury to the FOLH committee, greatly improving the liaison and communication with the bookshop volunteers.*

*Membership fees remain a steady source of income, generating circa £7,600 this year. Led by Elizabeth Guffogg, an updated membership leaflet was developed and we have trialled the use of promotional bookmarks in the bookshop with the aim of increasing the visibility of the Friends organisation. We will continue to look at ways of increasing the numbers of members and patrons over the course of the next 12 to 18 months.*

*We continue to provide refreshments in support of Julian Wilde's Outdoor Theatre events, which remain immensely popular. We would like to thank Julian for the donation he makes to the Friends each year.*

*We have supported a wide range of projects at the Hall, with just under £20k in funding this year. Our most significant project this year was the purchase of the 'Warrior' horse painting at auction, allowing us to return this Clifton family picture to the Hall. We would like to express our sincere appreciation of the sterling work of Sue Jones who led the process of acquiring the painting, getting it shipped from Bonhams, London to the Hall, and its subsequent cleaning. The painting now hangs in the Gold Room and we were pleased to be able to host a members' event in February to share the history and context of the painting.*

*Other projects we have funded include the purchase of additional IT software licences for the archives, the redecoration of the upstairs ceilings in the Hall, the acquisition of two ornamental stone urns for the South Prospect Garden, chain saw training for the ground volunteers and the costs of renting specialist equipment needed to crop and restore the Mount.*

*We would like to acknowledge the ongoing support provided by John Hornyak to the Grounds team and recognise the tremendous achievement of securing the National Collections of Giant Redwoods and Coastal Redwoods at the Hall.*

*The Friends look forward to providing ongoing funding for projects that address the improvement and maintenance of the grounds which are such a key asset for Lytham Hall alongside the Hall itself.*

### **The Way Forward for the Friends of Lytham Hall**

*As a committee, we recognise the significant progress that has been made in the restoration of the Hall and Parkland over the last several years. To date, the FOLH have provided just under £350,000 in support of many varied projects and activities.*

*We are currently in discussion with HTNW regarding their plans for the Hall over the next 3-5 years and their fund-raising requirements. The committee is now focussing on how the FOLH can best partner with HTNW to ensure we have an aligned way forward for supporting the ongoing successful restoration of the Hall and its grounds over the coming years.*

*For and on behalf of the Management Committee,  
Alison Wood, Chair.*



### **30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lunch**

*Dear Members,*

*We will be holding a lunch at Lytham Hall on*

*Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026,*

*to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the  
founding of the **Friends of Lytham Hall.***

*More details will be posted nearer the time  
but, in the meantime, please reserve the date,*

*Friends of Lytham Hall Committee.*



### **The Friends Bookshop**



#### **BOOK DONATIONS NEEDED**

Our second-hand bookshop opposite the Tearoom in the West Wing is a major source of income for the Friends.

The shop is organised by a dedicated team of volunteers, who do a great job of keeping it tidy and attractive. The success of the shop is dependant on donations of books in good readable condition, especially paperback fiction and children's books.

There is a container for donated books by the window as you enter the shop.

The shop is run on an honesty box system.

### **Friends of Lytham Hall Membership**

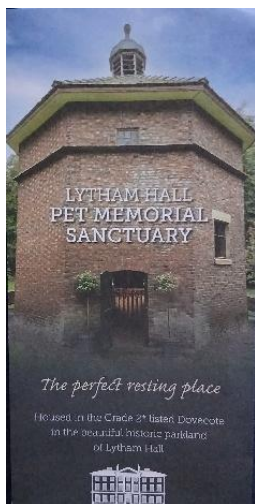
**£20 for a single member and £30 for joint members.**

Also, there is now an opportunity to get a free annual car park pass for Lytham Hall by becoming a **Patron of the Friends at £60 per year.**

Thank you for your continued support.

If you know 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.

### **The Dovecote Pet Memorial Sanctuary**



This Grade 2 listed building is now a Pet Memorial Sanctuary with compartments for pets ashes, and a calm, peaceful space to sit and reminisce.

This attractive building dates from the 1760's when the Georgian Hall was built. At the time, dovecotes were a familiar site on large estates. Young doves or pigeons [squabs] were a source of fresh meat throughout the year. Older birds were kept to produce eggs. The birds' droppings also provided valuable manure. [In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century, the saltpetre in their manure was used in the production of gunpowder]. Feathers were used for mattresses and pillows.

When a new dovecote was built, a flock of doves was introduced and encouraged to remain by the provision of nesting boxes. The interior would be whitewashed as doves are attracted to white surfaces.

Continuous ledges on the outside of the dovecote provided areas for perching and spots for sheltering from prevailing winds. Birds flew in through the louvred holes at the centre of the roof – inaccessible to larger predators.

The 850 nesting boxes at Lytham Hall are well-preserved and roomy, with a raised edge to stop eggs rolling out. The most impressive structure is the 'potence', a central revolving wooden pole with arms onto which ladders could be attached to enable the collection of eggs and squabs from the upper tiers.

A potence overcame the inconvenience and disturbance of moving a conventional ladder round the wall. The one at Lytham Hall is still in working condition.



### The Parkland

A stroll around the grounds of Lytham Hall in the Autumn provides some wonderful photo opportunities.

< Work on the **South Prospect Garden** continues with the completion of a new, and very colourful border. Now, the walk along by the Paradise Wall to the Mount is even more delightful.

**Curtains Pond**, with its reflections, is always worth a visit. Here it is captured at sunset, looking very atmospheric.



### Christmas at the Hall



#### 'The Most Wonderful Rhyme of the Year'

See the Georgian Hall decorated for Christmas with a Nursery Rhyme theme.

**25<sup>th</sup> November to 4<sup>th</sup> January,**

**11.30am - 4pm [last entry 3pm]**

*No booking required.*

**5pm - 8pm [last entry 7pm]**

*Booking required.*

**Tickets online at [Seaty.co.uk/rhyme](http://Seaty.co.uk/rhyme)**

We would like to wish all our members

**A Very Merry Christmas  
and a Happy New Year.**



Thank you to all the volunteers who have helped with any of the Friends' activities this year. We look forward to seeing you again next year.

A special Thankyou also to our 'Posties' who deliver the Newsletter in the local area.

### Charity Christmas Tree Festival

Look out for the Friends of Lytham Hall tree in the St. Annes Parish Church Charity Christmas Tree Festival from **Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> December**. Admission is free and is from 1.30 to 4.30.

This is the church which was commissioned in the early 1870s by Lady Eleanor Cecily Clifton, the wife of John Talbot Clifton (The Colonel) of Lytham Hall.

It is thought to have been named in memory of her aunt, and the new town that eventually grew up around it took its name from the church. The church provided a place of worship for the fishermen and farm labourers in the Heyhouses area who had previously had to walk several miles to St. Cuthbert's Church in Lytham, passing the Trawl Boat Inn on the way. It is the oldest substantial building in the town of St. Annes and was designated a Grade II listed building in 1993.



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Lytham Hall: [www.lythamhall.org.uk](http://www.lythamhall.org.uk)

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