



The Newsletter of the Lytham Heritage Group

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Clifton Street with The Palace cinema. The tram tracks are still there even though the service from the Square to the Hospital closed in 1926. The overhead tram wires however have been removed and the tram poles are now just acting as street lights.

Notes from The Chairman

Not too sure about the new normal as caution should still be our watchword. However in so many ways it is better for us to have the social interaction with other people which was mainly lacking in the lockdown months other than by using Zoom - other platforms are available! However planning for the future is still an unknown quantity and this has affected LHG in common with all other charities and social groups. I am sure you are aware the Windmill and Old Lifeboat House museums will not open in 2020. The difficult decision has been made to not open the Heritage Centre either or the Archive until 2021. Dave Hoyle was hoping to extend the opening times for the latter but with the ongoing uncertainty over the future of the Institute it has been put on the back burner. The talks at the Assembly Rooms booked for 20 20 in October and November may go ahead - see later for details.

I am sure all of you who have visited Lytham recently have not failed to notice the scaffolding which came down after 7 weeks at the end of August. It has proved to be a very expensive refurbishment in order to preserve the building in keeping with its Grade 2 listed status. There is more detail on the work later in this edition.

I asked in the last edition if anyone would like to make a one off extra contribution to running costs after a year with virtually no income but bills to pay. In addition the extra refurbishment costs were not anticipated. May I say a big thank you to everyone who has donated so far. The gesture was much appreciated, and the request is still open if you feel you can help. Thank you also to those members who have paid their membership for 2020/2021 and please encourage others to join the group.

I do hope this edition finds you well and looking forward to the future.

Sue Forshaw

OCTOBER 2020



Open letter to all stewards and helpers

I am writing to you on behalf of the Committee to express our grateful thanks for all you do for LHG. We did manage a few weeks in the centre at the beginning of the year with the fabulous schools exhibitions which proved to be popular and we were hoping to emulate them in 2021. For several months we were also hoping to open the Centre again in the autumn but that has been impossible. Unfortunately it would have been too late for the Windmill and Old Lifeboat House anyway and the Archive also remains shut. We know that all of you enjoy the different aspects of your role whether it is meeting the

public, putting the exhibitions together or just being part of something you are interested in. We are all hoping that 2021 will be the start 2020 did not fulfil, whether it be postponed weddings or opening our Windmill doors to families again. Rest assured if we do restart we will follow the guidelines applicable at the time for both your protection and that of our visitors. We will keep you up to date with what is happening and look forward to meeting again in 2021.

Sue Forshaw

Use of the Assembly Room and speakers/social events

The situation with Covid restrictions is ever changing and fluid, so anything I say here may only apply to the situation today as I write this. I have consulted with our 2 remaining speakers this year Peter Anthony on October 12th and Brian Topping on November 9th at 2.30pm. Both are still willing to come and are keen to get back to "normal".

STOP PRESS - Having written this piece last week, ever hopeful, those hopes were dashed with the announcement from the Government last night. This restriction of a maximum of 6 people gathering is likely to stay for the foreseeable future so we have made the decision to postpone all talks until March 2021 at the earliest. A new programme will be issued in January.

The Lytham Town Trust who run the Assembly Rooms and ourselves have produced Risk Assessments for the safety of all participants. I will list the salient points from both documents below so you can decide about mitigating your own risk in attending any of our future talks.

- There is strict adherence to social distancing of 2 metres or
- 1 metre with risk mitigation
- The suggestion is a maximum of 20 people attending.
- All visitors must sanitise their hands on entry.
- All visitors must wear a face covering at all times unless there is a "reasonable excuse".
- Only 1 person in the toilet area at one time.
- There will unfortunately be no refreshments served at meetings or raffles.
- Test and Trace details will need to be given on entry.

As the numbers are still likely to be restricted in the future I hinted in the last Antiquarian that I would need to have a reasonable idea of numbers attending. As with everything else we will keep you informed nearer the time along with any changes to the bullet points above.

Sue Forshaw

The Palace Cinema, Clifton Street, Lytham

EASTER MONDAY of 1930 in Lytham will be a day very different from any other Easter Monday since the town "came on to the map" many centuries ago.

It is a day that will mark a new era in the social life of the town; the day which will witness the introduction of that virile private enterprise of which past generations have dreamed as being necessary for the advancement of Lytham as a residential and, particularly, as a visiting resort.

The Blackpool Tower Co., Ltd., famed far beyond the shores of England for their supreme entertainments for the millions, have taken Lytham under their wing and built a cinema which embodies on its technical side everything of the last minute up-to-dateness for the perfect exhibition of pictures; whilst in its accommodation and furnishing it is the last word in luxurious and artistic comfort.

The Lytham people will speak with pride of their cinema - named the Palace - which has been described as one of the

choicest in England, having accommodation for 1,300 people. They have watched it being built, and on Monday they will see its doors thrown open for the first exhibition.

Truly, Monday will be a great day in the history of the town. The opening ceremony will be at 2-15 p.m. by Mrs. Clifton, who will be supported by the Mayor (Coun. A J. Price) and the Mayoress (Mrs. J. Blackledge), Aldermen and Councillors, members of the Hospital Committee, and members 'of the Board of Directors of the Tower Co.

After Mrs. Clifton has declared the cinema open, the Mayor will speak on behalf of the Borough of Lytham St. Anne's, and Capt. W. E. Nuttall, chairman of the Lytham Hospital, will express the thanks of the committee to the Tower Company for ' their generous gift of the afternoon's proceeds to the hospital.

The first picture to be shown will be the "Gold Diggers of Broadway," an all-talking, singing and dancing picture in entirely natural colours.

The Palace Cinema, Clifton Street, Lytham

ABOUT THE THEATRE

A New Note in Design and Construction

The Lytham Palace strikes a new note in theatre construction and design. It is essentially modern, and as regards design one may venture to suggest that it is the most original in the country and a model of its kind worthy of emulation anywhere in England.

The designers, Messrs. Frank Matcham and Co. (of which Mr. F. G. Chancellor, F.R.I.B.A., is the architect), are the firm who co-operated with Mr. Thomas Lamb, of New York, in the construction of the Empire, which has been justly described as one of the finest cinemas in the world.

Mr. Chancellor is, moreover, the architect, who has been appointed to build North London's home of Shakespeare, the Sadler's Wells Theatre. The skill and imagination shown by the architects of these two famous theatres is evident in the design of Lytham's new theatre.

The outside is typically modern, and is an example of a style which is a comparatively recent, and very worthy contribution to architecture. The front of the cinema is very colourful, the main structure being cream-coloured faience with a buff frieze, plum coloured parapet and surmounted by an effective panelled frieze in cream on a blue ground, depicting particularly striking ground, depicting sculptured figures. It has a Wedgwood effect which is particularly striking.

*The Palace Cinema, Clifton Street, Lytham, opened in 1930
(Lytham Heritage Group Archives)*



*Interior view of the Palace Cinema, Clifton Street, Lytham, 1930
(Lytham Heritage Group Archives)*



Coming to the interior one enters the circle from doors on the left and right, and it is from these points that the full beauty of the interior is instantly appreciated.

The main features of the side walls are painted sphinxes on the dados, and two Main panels at the front of the balcony to

represent a desert scene. The same theme is predominant right round the auditorium under the balcony, while over the proscenium is a beautiful sculptured and coloured frieze representing a quiet desert scene. It depicts the Arab merchants with their camel transport halted at an oasis in the golden sands.

A mass of colour in the most courageous style brings into the auditorium the spirit of Egypt. All the colours are true to the Country - barbarous and regal, and eminently stated for it is a palace of romance.

Five Colours of Seats

The seating merits a special word and is of the latest style and is in five colours, so that there are no two seats together

of the same shade and when viewed from a particular angle the blue, flame, grey, orange and brown are seen in diagonal lines across the auditorium or the balcony. It is very effective. Soft, thick carpets cover the entire floor.

Steel has played a great part in the construction of the cinema.

The Palace Cinema, Clifton Street, Lytham

The balcony and ceiling are entirely constructed of this metal, the ceiling being artistically panelled. It is believed that this is the second balcony only in England to be constructed in steel. The most modern type of electric lighting has been used consisting chiefly of tubes and beads of glass descending from glass friezes and concealing three coloured lights at the top. These lights illumine the glass tubes which gleam from top to bottom. Thaw coloured lighting is used throughout the auditorium.

Acoustics as Clear as a Bell

As the theatre has been built for sound its acoustic properties are perfect, and the reproduction on the Western Electric sound system is, like the Winter Gardens, Blackpool, installation, "the best you'll hear." No modern theatre is complete without its lounge and cafe, and in this direction the Lytham Palace is charmingly served. The tea-room and lounge are situated immediately over the entrance and can be easily reached from either stalls or circle. The tea-room has an outlook over Clifton Street; and is approached from the luxurious foyer by three steps flanked by electric fountains.

In addition to the theatre's own booking office, in the main hall, there is a special booking office for all the Blackpool entertainments with which the Lytham Palace is associated, namely, the Grand Theatre, the Opera House, Winter Gardens, Palace, Tower Circus and Tower.

Engaged in the Building

The Palace is, as a building, a work of construction which reflects the utmost credit on all the firms who have combined to bring it into existence. Unlike ordinary business premises it has many special features calling for the highest skill of the best craftsmen. All have done their work in very commendable manner.

The firm of Messrs John Sutcliffe and Sons. Ltd., builders, of the Electric Saw Mills, St. Annes, were the 'unit' contractors, doing the excavating, draining, concreting, brickwork and the joinery, including the shop and main entrance fittings, which have been exquisitely done in walnut.

Another well-known St. Annes firm to be associated with the work is that of Fred Stork, 37, St. Andrew's Road South, who specialises in French polishing and cellulose finish (with electric spray). The beautiful fibrous plaster decorations at the Palace are the work of the old-established firm of J. Alberti, Ltd., 153, Plymouth Grove, Manchester. They are modellers, sculptors and decorators.

The front elevation is carried out in the vitreous and Polychrome faience supplied by Shaw's Glazed Brick Co., Ltd., of Darwen. The effect is singularly artistic and charming. The plumbing work was in the bands of the St. Annes firm of Messrs. W. E. Russell and Co., who make a speciality of this very important department in building construction. Fire protection equipment has been installed by Clark & Vigilant Sprinklers, Ltd., the well-

known experts in fire protection, by the means of automatic sprinklers, hydrants, curtain drencher, and hand appliances.

Dave Hoyle (LHG Archivist)

For those wondering about the Egyptian theme, The Palace had originally been planned to be "The Luxor Talkie Theatre" in keeping with the public's great interest in all things Egyptian around that time. The Tower Company, however, decided to rename it in keeping with the "corporate name" of some of its other venues, the Palace Theatre in Blackpool and the Palace Cinema in Garden Street, St Annes.

The Lytham Palace was sadly demolished in 1958 to make way for the Arndale House building which included Woolworths (now Tesco). It was reported that the cinema had been offered to Lytham St Annes Council for use as a Conference Centre but was refused even though discussions were going on about the provision of an Art Gallery for the Borough. The Drill Hall in Henry Street and the booking hall frontage of the Goods Station in Station Road were being suggested around that time but all were refused by the Council and demolition of the beautiful cinema building went ahead. It could have made a superb Town Hall / Civic Centre / Conference Centre, and yes, an Art Gallery.

David Forshaw

Our Archivist Dave Hoyle finally received his 5 minutes of national fame when he was featured (or was the Talbot Dog the star?) on the Antiques Roadshow - Best of the Summer on BBC1 Sunday 27th September 2020.

Centre Refurbishment - before and after!



Our intrepid Treasurer Mike Bell and Archivist Dave Hoyle inspect the finished refurbishment of the Heritage Centre (photo David Forshaw)

After a few hiccups, not only with the problems of the pandemic, the Centre refurbishment was underway by mid-summer. We had to change builders before work started as our original choice had ceased trading. We were lucky to get the services of the Lowther Building Company, a firm based locally, that had given us an original quote, and has proved to be an excellent choice. Steve the project manager, kept us informed as the work progressed, especially with Dave Hoyle as the project manager from our side. Once the impressive scaffolding went up it was obvious that, from a more accurate survey than the one able to be done for the original quote, there were serious issues with the stonework. As a result a specialist firm of stone masons from Warrington was called in, who were equally professional, to quote for the extra work. This was a firm that Lowther had worked with before so we felt confident to sanction the work. A Grade 2 listed building is never going to be a cheap job in order to satisfy the regulations. An example of one problem that turned up was the mortar. It should be lime based to allow the Cumbrian Sandstone to breathe and there were areas of concrete fill - not a good idea. The work took approximately 6 weeks to complete before the scaffolding could come down leaving bits and pieces that could not be done with it up. As I write this there are still 1 or 2 small issues to resolve but the building is looking

fine. We have tidied up the garden and put in some new plants for interest and colour over the winter. Some of you may remember the building had a finial atop the door long gone. There has been discussion with the Conservation Officer from Fylde over it and we are working from old photos to come up with a solution. When we have one a scaffolding tower for the day should suffice. However we have to find the stone first which we understand is not commercially quarried now but we know someone to help us source it.

We will have a very big bill, far more than we anticipated. Some funding has been received already and we will be actively looking to offset some or all of the extra cost when the final bill is sent. Hopefully 2021 will host the planned exhibitions to make full use of our splendid building. *Sue Forshaw*



Was this the new Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet as rumoured around the town while the scaffolding was in place? (photo David Forshaw)



The scaffolding removed to reveal the superb looking refurbished grade II Lytham Heritage Centre (photo David Forshaw)

Thank you to all the members who made a donation towards the refurbishment of our Heritage Centre

Exhibitions Programme for 2021 Draft

Hilary has put together a draft exhibitions programme for 2021 but as you will appreciate this could change depending on government regulations in force next year. She has provisionally made the arrangements with the exhibitors so hopefully things will go ahead as planned below - fingers crossed!

IF BY ANY CHANCE we can open earlier in next February or early March then we will have a super new heritage exhibition to start the year with, all about Lytham's Shops through the years which is being prepared by the Archive Team.

30 Mar - 18 Apr	"Location Location" Textile art by the Diversity Group.
20 Apr - 09 May	"INSPIRATION 2021" Another Eclectic Mix of Colours and Styles by Members of The Blackpool Art Society.
11 -30 May	Abstraction and Portraiture by Will Pickering.
31 May - 20 June	"Coastal Contrasts " Paintings by Carla Raads.
22 June - 11 July	"Captured on Canvas" From the botanical to mechanical, a unique collection of art inspired in Lancashire by Glynn Ward.
13 July - 01 Aug	The Art and Craft Guild of Lancashire Summer Exhibition.
03 - 22 Aug	"Natural Inspirations" Contemporary Art by Joan Aitchison.
24 Aug - 12 Sep	"Human Land" Photographic Studies and Landscapes of Northern Britain by Peter Laurence.
14 Sept - 03 Oct	"Autumn Exhibition" by LSA Art Society.
05 Oct - 21 Nov	Heritage exhibition
26 - 28 Nov & 3 - 5 Dec	LHG Christmas Arts Fayre weekends

Hilary Fletcher

Members

New Member: Welcome to Barbara Weston

Margaret Wignall

The Group's condolences go out to the Wignall family for the loss of Margaret.

We are so very sad to hear that our dear friend and Lytham Club Day Hon Life President Mrs Margaret Wignall passed away yesterday, 6th September 2020. Margaret epitomised the spirit of Lytham Club Day, in fact it was her favourite day of the year Margaret was a true Lythamer. She was born in Lytham Hospital on 4th October 1933 and she never moved out of the town she loved so much. Margaret was involved in Club Day all her life from walking with school, taking part with the Lytham Congregational Church on Bannister St. and serving on the committee, in fact she is one of our longest serving committee members.

She married Arthur at St.John's Church on 28th August 1954 and they went on to have 5 children, Lynn, Elaine, Keith, Russell and Sarah. Arthur was a Lytham shrimper, a tradition which continues to this day with their son Russell. Arthur was the Cox of Lytham Lifeboat for many years and he received a bravery medal from the Queen at Buckingham Palace, which meant a trip to London and a new hat for Margaret!

Margaret also featured in Songs of Praise when it was broadcast from Lytham, Cliff Michelmores interviewed her at her kitchen table.

Margaret was delighted when her daughter Lynn was chosen to be the Rose Queen for Lytham Congregational Church in 1966 and equally thrilled when her youngest daughter Sarah was chief Maid 20 years later in 1986.

Margaret always had a smile on her face and a twinkle in her eye, we will miss her very much, a true Lytham Lady. We send our love and prayers to all her family, God Bless you Margaret, rest in peace x

Dave Hoyle



Tour of Lytham Hall on Monday 14th September

In many ways this was not what I had envisaged for the annual celebration of our founding. Of course Covid 19 has happened and we have to adjust to this new normal. As a result, in discussion with Paul Lomas from the Hall, it was decided to just have a private tour and leave the refreshments to the individuals. Fourteen people had expressed an interest in the event and for various reasons we ended up with 9. Currently all tours over the extended weekend period are self-guided so this meant we were lucky enough to have a commentary as well from Janet and Margaret and went around in one group. They were delighted to have an audience as it was their first since lockdown. The self-guided tours are working well and increasing footfall in a Covid secure way, so will continue in that way for the foreseeable future.

Of particular interest to LHG were the marvellous exhibitions on the newly refurbished upper floors and long gallery. These were based on Heritage exhibitions we had held in the centre and had been

coordinated by our very own Steve Williams ably assisted by numerous volunteers from the Hall. These included the latest on John Talbot Clifton and the Lytham Priory from several years ago.

All the main rooms are being continually added to by Peter Anthony and others in keeping with the period nature of the building and are a delight. They use old photographs of the rooms to search for similar pieces as most of the original fixtures and fittings were sold off. It is well worth a visit but keep an eye on the Lytham Hall website for opening times as winter approaches. Several of the party stayed at the Hall for lunch and all agreed it had been a wonderful trip down memory lane.

We wish the management at the Hall continued success during these challenging times.

Sue Forshaw



The Lytham Heritage Group's Priory Exhibition at Lytham Hall viewed during the Group's guided visit on 9th September 2020 with member, the masked Barry Cartmell on the right. (photo David Forshaw)

Christmas Meal at the Clifton Arms 2020

Normally at this time of year I would be sending you the menu and cost in this edition for our annual Christmas meal as well as an order form to complete with choices. I had spoken to the management at the Clifton Arms and the booking was still viable. Hopefully a tightening of the rules would not affect us but we just had to wait and see.

Unfortunately my optimism has evaporated as I had a phone call yesterday, September 27th, from the Clifton Arms cancelling the meal. They have cancelled all planned events in December on the latest Government advice which is likely to be stricter as the second wave hits us. It has been a disappointing year for all our events and activities but hopefully Spring 2021 will be having a more positive start. Let us hope we can all have a "normal" Christmas!

Season's Greetings from us all on the Committee and keep safe.



CAN YOU NAME THIS HOUSE PLEASE?

This is the third of the unknown (Lytham?) house photos that the Group's Archive Team would like to identify. Do you have any idea or suggestion please? There were no results with the first and second photos I'm afraid but maybe third time lucky.

David Forshaw

Next Antiquarian

Next issue we hope to have an article about the local builder John Heap supplied by Phil Stringer but unfortunately lack of space has put this back for the moment.

Swiss Lodge

The Swiss Lodge, or Swiss Cottage as it is also called, was built in 1884 in memory of Thomas Henry Clifton by his wife Madeline Diana, daughter of Sir Andrew Agnew (hence Agnew Street), 8th Baronet of Lochnaw, Wigtown.

Green Drive (although not originally named that) had been one of the carriage drives which radiated out from Lytham Hall, this one heading for Warton Hall on Lodge Lane. The Drive had been cut in two by the building of Ballam Road in 1844 which moved the public road to Westby away from the Hall grounds. This road had passed the Hall itself to the annoyance of the Squire. The public road to Heyhouses and Blackpool had already been moved away from the Hall with Church Road / Blackpool Road becoming the public road. The Hall could now shelter behind the new cobble stone wall which is such a feature of Church Road, Blackpool Road and Ballam Road. The Green Drive was also truncated by the opening of the railway in 1846 which chopped off the Saltcotes end to allow the railway line to pass through.



Swiss Lodge, at the Saltcotes end of Green Drive
(photo David Forshaw)



Swiss Lodge before large scale extensions (from a postcard c1930s)

Thomas Henry married Madeline in 1867 and they had seven children, their eldest son being John Talbot, the future Squire who at the age of six laid the foundation stone of the new town of St Annes-on-the-Sea, carved out of Lytham West End.

Sadly Thomas Henry never became Squire as he died in April 1880 after two years of chronic illness and before his father, The Colonel, died in April 1882.

As the memorial plaque to Thomas Henry on Swiss Lodge is very sparse in detail one wonders just how much influence Madeline had on the building or if her mother-in-law, Lady Eleanor Cecily was still influencing things on the Clifton Estate as the new Squire, John Talbot was still a minor.

Green Drive was eventually presented to the Town by the Squire. The Lodge has been extended considerably but sympathetically over the years to make a large and impressive property.

David Forshaw



The plaque commemorating Thomas Henry Clifton
(photo David Forshaw)

Thomas Henry Clifton was born on the 3rd March 1845, the only child of the Squire John Talbot Clifton (The Colonel) and his wife Eleanor Cecily, (nee Lowther, later Lady Eleanor Cecily in April 1872 by Royal Warrant after her brother Henry became 3rd Earl of Lonsdale).

Thomas Henry was commissioned into his father's regiment, the 1st Lancashire - Duke of Lancaster's Own, as a Lieutenant in 1862 and was promoted to Captain in 1868. He became Member of Parliament for North Lancashire in 1874 and lived in Ashton Hall, Preston when in his constituency.

Contact Details

We welcome all queries and suggestions. Please send emails to

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or leave a note addressed to The Editor, at the Heritage Centre.

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