



## Notes from The Chairman

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Antiquarian. There have been changes to the format of the newsletter since we brought out the revised colour version but we would still welcome any of your ideas for the type of articles you would like to see. So please let us have your comments either by a note dropped into the Heritage Centre or e mail to - thecentre@lythamheritage.co.uk.

We have certainly had a busy summer in all our venues most notably at the Forces Weekend in August when visitor numbers for the Windmill and Old Lifeboat House museums 'went through the roof'. We were lucky that the weather was at least dry and the event had been widely publicised on social media platforms. As a result lots of families came along as well as the usual splendidly dressed characters including our very own 'Brigadier General' Dave Hoyle, 'Resistance Leader' Brian Hankinson and 'Vice Admiral' Steve Williams! The volunteers on duty over the

weekend had enjoyed the banter with the mainly friendly and enthusiastic visitors but were certainly glad of a sit down and a cuppa at the end of it!

Autumn Now that Autumn is upon us we start with our fuller social programme leading up to the festive season. We start with Tony Ford who is a councillor on St Anne's Town Council and on Monday 9th October he will be enlightening us on his role. This is followed in November by Heather Davis on conserving the heritage of Lancashire. We then finish the year with a Christmas lunch at Lytham Hall in December.

Finally may I say a big thank you to all who help to keep the group successful in its efforts to protect, preserve and inform others of the marvellous heritage of Lytham. In order to continue this work we always need new members who can bring in different ideas and expertise to the group to supplement what we already have. Please promote the group's message whenever and wherever you can.

Until next time do have a mellow autumn and lively festive season!

I hope to see you all at future events or in the centre.

*'Vice Admiral' Steve Williams*



*'Brigadier General' Dave Hoyle with 'Resistance Leader' Brian Hankinson*



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# The Story of Lytham Pier 1865 - 1960

That 'curious' 18th century sea bathing and health craze which captured the Victorians' imagination along with their love of promenading by the sea, made the building of piers inevitable.

Any seaside town worth its salt could not be without its own pier and Lytham was no exception. So, in 1861 the Pier company sought permission to build one 'at a cost of £6,000 and no more'.

Faith in the project was so great that shares were taken up at once, the money being raised in shares of £5 each. The Shareholders were mainly Lythamers and their friends. As soon as finance was in place Colonel Clifton, Lord of the Manor placed the land required from him at the disposal of the promoters, charging only a nominal rent. Mr Eugenius Birch of London designed the 914ft x 18ft pier plus a broad entrance area of 150ft. Seats were placed on each side throughout the whole length and gas-lamps were placed in recesses at a distance of 250 yards. The pier stood upon cylindrical iron columns in clusters, the walkway being of wood with the remainder of the structure entirely of iron. At the end nearest the promenade there were elegantly designed balustrades of iron and two octagonal houses, of ornamental design - for the accommodation of visitors and the officers of the company. At the sea terminus there was another house of similar design, for the accommodation of persons embarking and disembarking from the steamers which ran between Lytham, Southport, Blackpool and Preston. The Pier was approached in a direct line from that part of the promenade, which led from Dicconson Terrace and was near the Assembly Rooms and the Clifton Arms Hotel. Construction was carried out by Messrs Laidlaw & Sons of Glasgow and completed in 1865.



The pier was officially opened by Lady Eleanor Cecily Clifton, on Easter Monday 1865 and the whole affair had quite a holiday aspect. The railway companies ran special trains from Manchester, Bolton, Preston and other places, and a multitude of visitors poured into the town. The Friendly Societies, the Clergy, the 3rd Royal Lancashire Militia, the 29th (Lytham) Lancashire Rifle Volunteers, of which Captain Clifton was the commanding officer, the 65th (Rossall) L.R.V., under Captain Charles Clarke, visitors and dignitaries assembled in Lytham Market Place and formed themselves into a procession. This procession escorted Mrs. Clifton to the pier, where she performed the ceremony of declaring it open to the public. The pier was gaily decorated with banners; and on the water several boats, including the Lytham life-boat, also displaying flags, cruised about.

The pier was Lytham's first leisure attraction advertised as being "for exercise, pleasure, or any other purpose" on payment of 2d" (nearly 1p).

In 1895 the Pier Company collapsed, but was reformed in 1901 in the shape of one that could enlarge the Pavilion and convert the bandstand at the pier-head into the Floral Hall. On the 6th October 1903, a storm crashed two steel-hulled barges away from their mooring, and cut through the pier. The two sand barges causing the damage belonged to the Preston Navigation Company who paid for the £1,400 repair bill, following a court case. To keep up with the times the Floral Hall held pantomimes from about 1908 to 1912. It must have been a sad night when the central

pavilion burnt down (1928), the sky glowing red from the flames. For several years previous to the fire, the Pavilion had been used as a picture house, in competition with Henry Street picture house. It is perhaps ironic that the night the pier burnt down the picture showing was 'Hot Stuff', a comedy about the antics of an amateur fire brigade! After the fire, the pier started falling into disrepair. The owners did their best to restore the various amenities but it must have been frustrating especially the period during 1939 -1949 owing to the war and the supply difficulties this would have caused.

In 1959, despite a residents' petition of 2,593 signatures, the Lytham St. Anne's Town Council refused to pay the £5,000 needed to save it. The pier was demolished in 1960.

*David Hoyle  
The Archivist of Lytham*





## The River Ribble and the Pilot Boats Part 2 - Stanley Brown

Stanley Brown was invited by the Ribble Pilots to take trips out with them and this is the second of a two-part article describing a typical day in the 1940s or 50s. The SS Helen Craig mentioned in the article, was known by countless dockers as 'Th'owd bo'oan bo'at' as she often carried a stinking mass of animal bones from the Belfast abattoirs to the port. It was often said you could tell when she was in dock due to the vast flocks of seagulls and

*I follow my companion who makes his way forrard and beside the mast there is a small hatchway, it doesn't look more than 2 ft square. He turns round and faces me, stoops, puts his foot in the hole and step by step disappears down, one presumes, a ladder, all that one can see now is a pair of hands grasping the hatch coving, knuckles whitening, they unclasp and disappear and a voice below calls out, "Come on down for a cuppa tea." I look down below me, through that square hole I see a sink, heads, table, steaming mugs of tea, a tin of condensed milk, an aluminium sugar basin, a sauce bottle and there is a whiff of frying bacon.*

*"OK, thanks," and as I look how to get below I see a vertical ladder which I carefully descend, and I am below. Beside me a stove, two kettles on it, a frying pan and a tea pot on a shelf above; there are benches along two sides, on either side of the table, each bench following the curve of the bows till they almost meet. Behind the seat on one side a cupboard, between the cupboard and the ladder a sink and diminutive draining boards, between the ladder and the stove it narrows down into another much bigger cabin - the saloon. Someone moves along on the seat and I am bidden to reach a cup, hanging from a hook above the sink, I pour myself a cup of tea, gosh how strong, sit down, someone pushes the tin of milk at me and a spoon, and I pour, through the hole surrounded by coagulated evaporated milk, its brother intake hole similarly coagulated, wax-like and sticky. I stir the tea until I achieve the right colour, and when a hand pushes the sugar basin over I sweeten it, and as I stir I listen to the conversation.*

*I don't want to tear myself away, but I must watch what's happening on deck so I withdraw up the ladder to the deck. Charlie calls for Teddy to stand by his stern line which alone is now holding us to the Barge, and goes into the wheelhouse. Almost immediately below us there is a burst of power as some big engine bursts into life, Charlie puts the window in the wheelhouse down, a window like a railway carriage window that lets down in the casing and is raised or lowered with a strap. He turns the wheel, a greater surge of noise from the engine, a boiling under the stern and we are away. Slowly we steam upstream round the stern of the barge, turn into the flood, Charlie opens up his engine more and now we are really away. Amazing how much in that short time the tide has risen, the width of water between the barge and the shore*

other birds hovering nearby hoping to feed off the maggots and other detritus from the rotting cargo. She was built in Belfast in 1891 and was for many years under the command of Captain Kennedy. The boat sailed twice a week between Preston and Belfast for over 50 years until 1959.

*S.S. Helen Craig leaving Preston Dock in 1959 on her last voyage from the port - Preston Digital Archive Flickr*



*I walk up to the foredeck and stand in the bows. Straight ahead for a mile or two it seems, there ahead is the river, but it is more like a canal with walls on each side, high stone walls growing up out of the water, no, not like a canal, it is like a road for aren't those stone walls on either side, yes, like the dry walling of the north country, and yes, I know, there is something that makes it more road-like - those lamp-posts. Perches as they are called, but lamp-posts is what they are, alternately on one and then on the other side of the channel, and behind those walls rising on each side the sand banks, lovely golden sand too - wouldn't the kids love it here, what a spot no-one seems to know of, so near to the land, and yet so hard to get at across the sticky mud at the edge of the beach.*

*There is a faint breeze now, clean, fresh, invigorating and yet so faint, and apart from our engine only the faint rush of water astern, like flowers in the still water. Everywhere is so quiet, occasionally the cry of a seabird to break the quietness.*

*We are among the fishing boats now, the shrimpers, those mastless boats, so low in the water, seeming to steer themselves until every now and then a bent figure in the stern, stands upright pitching something overboard, checks the course, and bends down again working below decks sorting through the catch, throwing overboard the odd bits of rubbish, sea weed, a crab, a starfish, that has come aboard in the net. For a moment such a figure will*

## The River Ribble and the Pilot Boats Part 2 cont.

*stand erect, look about him again, give a wave and stoop below again between his decks as he works on his way home. Quickly we pass, our combined speeds in opposite directions bringing us quickly together and parting us just as quickly. Still a rather weak coffee-coloured sea races past, calm, occasionally flecked with large patches of coffee-coloured soap-suddy spume, a floating tin can, a tree trunk, going back upstream again, a bottle, a child's beach ball, what tears behind its loss, it has been out to sea, and back it comes again with all the other flotsam that washes in and out with each tide.*

*Here are the pumps, those 'domestics' whose job is to vacuum the river bed, each tide, to suck up into themselves daily thousands of tons of silt and sand, washed in by each tide, and carry it out to sea and dump it. Anchored there, just now awakening with the flood tide, after their rest from the labours of the last tide. Bestirring themselves, and getting ready to go about their chores again, the same chores twice each day. A face appears over her side, a wave and we are past, and so it is as we pass each one.*

*Ahead the horizon quivers, though the waters here in the channel are yet still and calm, so like a canal, the seas tumble up and down in great heaving bumps at the bar. Here we are still in calm waters, protected by those banks and hillsides of sand on either side. But in an hour or two as the tide rises all will be white horses here, as*

*Our forefoot lifts and we begin to feel the heave of the water, noticeably of weaker coffee now. Here already a steamer, steaming slowly in towards us. Unmistakably the Helen Craig, that doyenne of the river, smoke lunging from her funnel, as the light breeze caresses the waters. As she bears down on us, figures appear at her rails, working, and a pilot ladder snakes down her side and the men lean over and stare at us, a door on the bridge opens and her skipper comes out on to his bridge and surveys us from his height. He raises his hand in cheerful acknowledgement. Charlie reaches for the buzzer to warn the pilot below, that his ship is there and as we round up and run alongside from astern, the sea recedes from under her counter stern to show the rudder and propeller now stilled, and now submerging again, washes up and down noisily, sucking and spouting and slapping against her plates, and breaking in spray on the water again.*

*Suddenly a staccato hiss of escaping steam, penetrating, deafening, her safety valve blowing off, nozzling a white jet of steam into the air, a jet of white so well defined against the blue sky like the jet from a fireman's hose, and the effect is similar, for now as it condenses, wafting gently over in the breeze it falls on us like rain, one tries at first to dodge the drops fearing that it will be hot, and indeed it is still quite warm. A splatter on one's ear and on one's lips, ugh, yet why ugh for it must be clean.*

*We nuzzle alongside, catching up with her as she slows, Charlie bringing her alongside and as we rise and fall beneath the pilot ladder, the pilot standing now on the platform on the bulwarks amidships, holding on to the fence like wire that runs around the platform, watching his moment, puts out his free hand and a foot and is on the ladder and climbing up.*

*As we fall away and turn, the pilot climbing to the deck, jumping down to the deck and up the bridge ladder, the captain moves to his telegraph, we hear the clang in the engine room, and answering clang on the bridge, and one can see the propeller, as the sea rises and falls, begin to thump and thrash to drive her on. The pilot disappears*

*into the wheelhouse, and on deck one of the crew moves forward with two mugs of tea and we stare back at the two faces staring at us from the galley, now a nod as in smiling greeting, and we are astern of her. What does she carry? Oh, general, comes in twice a week mostly. And we are on our way again to meet the next.*

*S.S. Helen Craig at Preston Dock in 1952, decorated to celebrate Preston Guild - Preston Digital Archive Flickr*



*the seas roll and pitch and break over the shallows, over those banks. Water 10 miles wide across the estuary, and 100 miles or more westwards to Ireland. No wonder this estuary was feared before man confined and tamed the deep water channel running straight like a road to the port, 12 miles from here.*



# Lytham Pet Shop

The first proprietor of the pet shop in the Market buildings was Arthur Lowe who was born in Manchester in 1886 and married Phyllis Madeline Bamber, the youngest child of William J.J. Bamber and his wife Sarah Ellen, from Lytham. He was working as a commercial traveller (known as reps. today) for the Manchester firm, Saunders and Warburton, who supplied pet foods and accessories. In 1937, this firm was experiencing financial problems and also, coincidentally at the same time, his wife inherited a half-share in a property in Lytham so they decided to move to Lytham and arrived here in March, 1937.

He rented No. 1 Market Buildings from the Clifton Estate and set up in business as a pet food supplier. The main areas of his business catered for dogs and cage birds, although he sold rabbit food, parrot food, pigeon food, fish food and cat food.



*Arthur Lowe and Irene Lowe*

For dogs he sold dog biscuits, tinned meat, collars, leads, dog baskets, dog coats and toys and also identity discs, which he got engraved. For birds he sold bird cages and accessories, seed and millet sprays. The birds he sold were mainly budgies and canaries but he did sell a few foreign birds from the Far East which ceased during wartime and restarted in a small way again after the war. The only other pets he sold were goldfish and tortoises. He also sold pet remedies such as Bob Martins, Shirleys and George Bells condition powders. He had an arrangement with a local man, Dick Dennison who had worked for a vet, for dogs to have their coats clipped at the end of the Winter (no dog's beauty parlour then!)

He had just nicely built up a good little business (from an empty shop, no good will) when war was declared.

Also in the Market building shops at this time was John Turner, gentleman's hairdresser next door at No. 2. The other two shops on the right hand side of the Market Hall entrance (No. 3 and 4) were empty. In the Market Hall itself were stalls of varying kinds, including Tom and Mary Eastham, greengrocers; John Knowles, fishmonger; Dickie Lockett, watch repairer; and a lady selling second-hand clothes. These businesses slowly closed down during the war, bar the watch repairer. Shortly after the war started, No. 3 was requisitioned by the Ministry of Food as the Food Office, issuing ration books etc., babies' orange juice and Cod Liver Oil, and No. 4 remained empty until after the war when it was taken over by Albert Turner as a butcher's shop. All the tenants of these businesses were required to do fire watch duties during the war, occupying a room in the clock tower upstairs. There were no shops at the rear (only Public Toilets) until post 1947.

During the war years Arthur had to diversify because there was a shortage of petrol, deliveries were not on the same regular basis and stocks were becoming depleted. He did manage to obtain a small petrol allowance which enabled him to obtain extra supplies of animal foodstuffs from Preston and Wigan and also deliver orders, poultry food being both dusty and heavy.

Families were encouraged to keep a few domestic poultry if they had room in their back gardens and he and Mr. Cecil Fortune set up Lytham and District Poultry and Rabbit Keeper's Club in 1941. (A full detailed account was written by Bill Owen in The Antiquarian Issue No. 55 dated June 2000). The poultry food was rationed like everything else, and the owners had to have a ration card to get the necessary food. Two of his children helped him in dealing with ration cards, collecting the cards etc. and for this they received sweet money!

Also to help finances, the family boarded dogs in the family home when owners were on holiday. The dogs were not shut up in kennels but lived in with the family and children. The family remember fondly, "Spot Dawson" who was a friendly dalmation and was a favourite, and also two Elkhounds called Carl and Paul, who lived on East Beach. There were quite a few other regulars but these stand out.

Arthur inherited his mother's business acumen - it was said he could have sold snow to eskimos (Inuits) and was very much like Arkwright in the BBC Comedy programme 'Open All Hours'. He mostly managed not to send customers away empty handed if he could help it - they usually left with some alternative product even if he couldn't supply what they had gone in for!

In 1947 he was forced to relocate to a new shop built round the back (where most people remember the pet shop as being located) when Lloyds Bank wanted the premier position where it still remains to this day. The Food Office was also relocated round to the back where the building juts out. From this date there were four different businesses (1) The Pet Shop, (2) Small Haberdashers owned by Madge Holt, (3) Snack Bar. (4) Watch Repairer and the Food Office.



*Arthur Lowe, Irene Lowe and Madge Holt*

In later years, as Arthur got older and his son grew up, he worked in the shop alongside his father. When his son had to go away to do his National Service, his youngest daughter took over. Sadly, he died suddenly in May, 1954, and the two children continued to run the business until the family were able to sell it. It continued to be run as a pet shop for many years until fairly recent times when the building was altered to make one large sales area as it is today.

# Future Events

**Monday 9th October – Speaker Tony Ford**  
**Venue – Lytham Assembly Rooms at 2.30pm**



Tony was speaking on his role as a Community Councillor for St Annes a role he has held since 2007. He has a keen interest in the town especially the historical aspects such as the buildings and the role the railway has played in the town's development. He was also instrumental in producing the revamped town trail. Tony gave an interesting and informative talk.

**Monday 13th November – Speaker Heather Davis**  
**Venue – Lytham Assembly Rooms at 2.30pm**

Heather is the Conservation Manager for Lancashire County Council and has responsibility for 12 museums, art galleries etc. She is a member of the senior management team for the LCC museum service. She will be speaking about conserving the heritage of Lancashire. Do come along and find out more from Heather about the future of these assets especially in the light of the current financial climate.



**Thursday 14th December –**  
**Christmas Lunch and Grand Raffle**

The Christmas lunch has been arranged for Lytham Hall this year. We are using their standard lunch menu with 2 choices for each of 3 courses. I have requested the Ice cream which was not on the original menu to give people a choice. However coffee or tea is not included and can be purchased along with any drinks required with the meal separately. You will note the price is almost half what we have paid in the past! Anyone who has eaten at Lytham Hall will know how good it is so we should have a lovely afternoon. Numbers will be limited to 50 so please be prompt with your replies as I think this will be a popular event.

We do have a grand raffle to raise some funds for our various projects so if you would like to donate a prize it can be brought on the day or left in the centre for our attention and thank you in anticipation.  
(Booking form on page 7) *Sue Forshaw*



## Membership

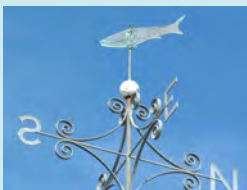
Welcome to new members: Tony Nicholson from Bristol and Peter Slater from Lytham St. Annes

Sadly George Hamilton, husband of Beryl passed away last month. A long time member of the Lytham History Society. Thoughts are with the family at this sad time.

## CREATURES ARE WATCHING YOU – BUT WHAT AND WHERE?

**Question 12 answer**

– The little fish has to be almost at sea so it is a fitting place atop the Old Lifeboat House



**Question 13** Really because of the backdrop just visible this is too easy a location. As an extra hint it was the four legged friend of a Goddess and both were removed when a car park was laid out instead of the garden they lived in. The photo was taken in May 1981.

*David Forshaw*



# Heritage Centre Exhibitions

## 5 - 24 Sept "Recollections of an Outdoor Painter" and "Inspired by Clay"

This was a lovely display of watercolours by Pete Slater and Ceramics by our volunteer Marie Kershaw. Their art blended yet contrasted well to provide a popular variety of both media, shape and subject matter.



## 17 Oct - 10 Dec "Collodion Collection North West"

Lytham Heritage Group proudly presents the eagerly awaited follow-up exhibition of Alfred Thompson's glass slide photographs taken in the late 1900's. This time we show his images of Blackpool and the Fylde, Liverpool, Lake District and the Isle of Man - so interesting to see how these familiar places looked over 100 years ago



## 26 Sept - 15 Oct

### "An Autumn Exhibition"

Our annual exhibition by Lytham St Annes Art Society - always great quality and quantity. This is their 21st successive year of exhibitions at the Heritage Centre.

If you have any comments, please put them in the Visitors Book, or via the Contact details on Page 8. Hilary Fletcher, Centre Exhibitions Coordinator

### *MENU*

#### *To Start*

*Tomato and Basil Soup, roll and butter (v)*

*Or*

*Duck and Orange Paté with toast*

#### *Main Course*

*Traditional Roast Turkey and all the trimmings*

*Or*

*Roasted Red Onion and Gruyère Tart*

#### *Dessert*

*Lattice Apple and Mincemeat Pie served with Brandy sauce*

*Or*

*Ice cream*

This is to be held at Lytham Hall on Thursday 14th December 2017

At 12.30pm for 1 o'clock

Please complete the form below for your choices which must be returned to the Heritage Centre for the attention of Sue Forshaw by

Friday 1st December at the latest please.

Cost will be £13.50 including tip for members and £14.50 for guests

Please make cheques payable to 'Lytham Heritage Group'

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

No in party \_\_\_ Members \_\_\_\_\_ Non members \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

E mail if available \_\_\_\_\_

Names of up to 3 people you would like to sit with \_\_\_\_\_

Choices:

Starter \_\_\_\_\_

Main \_\_\_\_\_

Dessert \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a cheque for £ \_\_\_\_\_

# Lytham Windmill and Lifeboat Museum

Another great season for Lytham Windmill and Lifeboat Museum

It has been another fabulous year at the Windmill and Lifeboat Museum. Despite an initial slow start due to the weather, the Windmill has seen visitor numbers increase from 35,000 last year to 36,000 this year.

Thank you to all our amazing stewards and helpers for all your hard work and commitment. It is greatly appreciated, not just by ourselves, but by the team at Fylde Borough Council. The Windmill and Old Lifeboat House would not be open without you.

We will be working on a few more improvements over the Winter period, ready for the new 2018 season next Easter. If you would like to get involved or have any interesting thoughts or artefacts to share, please don't hesitate to contact Steve on:  
steve.williams@lythamwindmill.co.uk



*Steve Williams and Margaret Nickson*



## Contact Details:

We welcome all queries and suggestions. Please send emails to

**[thecentre@lythamheritage.co.uk](mailto:thecentre@lythamheritage.co.uk)**

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