



The Newsletter of the Lytham Heritage Group

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Notes from The Chairman

Well not sure where last year went but here we are in 2020. May I take this opportunity to wish you all a Healthy and Prosperous New Year. Hopefully all the decorations are safely stored away for the next festive season. As the nutrition experts' assessment that the average Christmas Day food and drink intake is 6,000 calories or about 24,000 joules (metric) perhaps we are also looking to start that diet! There is a lot to look forward to in 2020 and as I write this a stable government and progress on Brexit would be nice. However I am talking about what we are doing at Lytham Heritage Group. We have welcomed a new Committee member Philip Stringer who is keen to explore more multimedia ways for information both within our Heritage Centre exhibitions but also in the various platforms available to a wider audience, so we wish him well in his endeavours. We have a varied and interesting programme of exhibitions at the Heritage Centre which are detailed later in this edition. The social events programme is also a varied one and includes a talk by Peter Anthony later in the year all about the future for Lytham Hall. The 2 programmes from the Antiques Roadshow have put it firmly in people's minds as a go to place to visit in the North West. Easter will see the opening of the Windmill and Old Lifeboat museums until September with Steve Williams at the helm which continue to draw in large numbers of visitors. My annual plea for stewards in all our venues which also includes the Archive is an important one as we do rely on your help. If you can spare a few hours in 2020 you can contact Steve or Jennifer Trueman (Centre) or David Hoyle (Archive) by e mail or letter via the centre and they would be very pleased to have a chat with you. Thank you in anticipation.



At the moment the future of the Lytham Institute building is in abeyance until Fylde's application to the Charity Commission is concluded which will not be a quick process apparently. Thank you to those who have responded to the piece in the last Antiquarian and if any still want to let me know their thoughts about its future then please contact me via the centre e mail or drop me a line also via the centre. Will sign off there and get on with what is also on my list of things to do!

Sue Forshaw

Message from the Committee

To reduce the use of paper and in line with other local interest groups we have been working towards using electronic means to deliver the Antiquarian. To this end we will be delivering the April edition in this way to those who have furnished us with their email addresses. You can also receive a hard copy as usual if you let us know by the end of January please via the centre email, in order to adjust our data base. If you do not have an email address you will still receive your Antiquarian in the normal way.

thecentre@lythamheritage.co.uk

Using our current data we will be sending out the January edition electronically as a trial. If it does not arrive, or if you would like to be added to the data base email address book, again please let us know by the end of January.

We hope you will find this to be a useful addition to your membership.

Sue Forshaw, Chairman, on behalf of the Committee

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The Cecil Street Murders of 1886 *David Hoyle Archivist of Lytham*

A dreadful tragedy was committed in Cecil Street, Lytham on Tuesday evening 6th November - the first of its kind during the past half century - by an elderly man named James Mellor, who was formally charged at Kirkham on Wednesday morning with the crime, and remanded. It appears that in the end house situated on the northwest side of Cecil Street - one of the pleasantest streets in Lytham - there have for some time resided James Mellor, aged 67, his wife Sarah, aged 58, and her sister, Betty Kent an unmarried woman of 56 years.



Mrs. Mellor had kept a lodging home, and Mellor, who is a blacksmith, has been until recently in the employment of the Improvement Commissioners. He ceased to be employed by the commissioners when work became scarce.

The parties went to reside in Lytham some ten years ago. Mellor who is stated to be a native of the district around Stalybridge, is a man of short stature, and is generally spoken of as being steady and industrious. It is also said that he is a teetotaler.

His wife and her sister were both big, powerful women. There are many rumours afloat that their domestic life was unhappy, but there is nothing to lead to the supposition that their relations have been other than comfortable recently.

For the past month they have been staying in the house of Mr and Mrs. Whittaker, of Chatterton Road, Oldham, Mr. Whittaker being a gentleman in feeble health.

Shortly after two o'clock - at which time nothing unpleasant had been noticed - the visitors left the house and did not return until after the occurrence which we have to record.

Between two and four it seems that Mellor was observed walking up and down the street, but nothing unusual was noticed. About four, however Mellor accosted Police Constable Murray, and asked him to accompany him to his house.

Murray asked why he should go, and not receiving a satisfactory answer, he repeated the question whereupon Mellor said. "I want you to come and look at two women who have hurt themselves." The policeman thereupon accompanied him to his house. Mellor led him by the garden to the back door, which he unlocked with a key produced from his pocket. They entered the kitchen and Mellor, pointing to his wife who lay lifeless on the sofa, said, "There's one there, and I'll show you where the other is." The officer at once discovered that there had been foul play, as the head of Mrs. Mellor was completely battered in, and she was apparently dead. Mellor afterwards led the way into the Garden - narrow strip of ground some 33 yards long, and pointed the officer to a spot where Miss Kent lay murdered.

Murray at once arrested the murderer, who made no resistance and spoke not a word, and having summoned assistance and dispatched messengers for Doctors Fisher and Eason, he took the prisoner down the road to Bannister Street Police Station and delivered him into the custody of Sergeant Harrison.

Murray returned to the place, and superintended the removal of Miss Kent into the house. Shortly after this Dr Fisher arrived and found that both the victims were dead.

The Cecil Street Murders of 1886

The Trial

A great deal of medical evidence was produced to suggest that Mellor was insane, both by the medical experts who considered his reaction to the crime, and by his sons, who related the change following his accident. He seemed to feel that both his wife and sister-in-law were hatching a scheme to get rid of him and he had a feeling of constant persecution regarding his household affairs. At times he had been very violent and living under the delusion that everybody was working against him. The eldest son told the court of the unaccountable strangeness in his father's actions ever since the time of the accident and said that before that time things had been happy and comfortable at home. The jury were told by the Defence Counsel that they would be very slow indeed to find the prisoner sane when he committed the frightful deed. His Lordship in his summing up stated that the prisoner committed the offences, of that there was no doubt. He then defined the legal meaning of the word 'insanity' and warned the jury that they must not suppose that mere violence of temper was in the legal sense insanity.

During the Judge's address Mellor leaned forward in the dock and endeavoured to catch every word that fell from Mr Justice Day's lips. Throughout the whole proceedings the accused man had remained calm and collected despite the gaze of a crowded court. The jury considered their verdict for only a few moments and then the foreman announced that they found the prisoner guilty of the killings, but not responsible for his actions. The clerk of the Crown then said, "Then you find him not guilty on the ground of insanity?" To which question the foreman replied, "Yes". His Lordship then informed Mellor that he would be confined during Her Majesty's Pleasure, and he was at once removed from the dock. James Mellor died in 1899.

Lytham's New Police Station *David Forshaw*

Police presence as far as premises in Lytham St Annes ended in 2019 with the closure of the Police interview rooms in Rossall Road and the St Annes Police Station on St Andrews Road North following the opening of the new area Police HQ on Clifton Road, Marton. The means of maintaining law and order these days falls to the Police car or van arriving here in time before



*Police Station, Bannister Street, Lytham 30.04.2000
(photo David Forshaw 01)*

the malefactor is half way to the M55. (It seems wrong to call the vans Black Marias now they are white but it did sound better - unless, no doubt, you were being taken for a ride in one.)

In 1902 it was a different matter with Lytham's fine new Police Station and Magistrates Court officially opening their doors on 21st August in Bannister Street and North Clifton Street respectively. Designed by Manchester Architect Henry Littler, the County Architect, building work had started in 1900 under the supervision of the main contractor Henry Mogridge of Lytham who did the brick work and slating. He sub-contracted various parts to other local firms, Butterworth & Sons of Blackpool for the stonework, John Walmsley of Preston for joinery, John Coulston of Blackpool

for plumbing and painting and Mr Forshaw of Lytham for the plastering, the final cost coming to around £7,000. A fine building had been built, one for the town to be proud of.

The Police had a Station in Bannister Street from 1855 when it had moved there from Douglas Street. Calling Douglas Street "a street" was apparently rather grand for what was more like a rough track but according to Alan Ashton this was improved and became Bath Street once the bath house was built at the seaward end. This was later demolished and the Neptune Hotel

Lytham's New Police Station

(now re-named the Queens Hotel) was erected in its place in 1854.

Maybe Lytham was a more lawless town in the early 1900s but the living accommodation provided for the constabulary in the new large Bannister Street complex was considerable. A Police Inspector occupied the house facing George Street. Fronting North Clifton Street was accommodation for a sergeant, one married constable and six unmarried constables. One hundred and seventeen years later two officers in a car driving around the town are seen as an event but of course the need for shift work means that more officers, normally unseen, are involved policing the area in reality.

The Magistrates Court was a fine example and could hold up to 200 people. The ceiling held two leaded-light windows depicting the Red Rose of Lancashire. The centrally placed prisoners' dock had stairs leading down to the four cells, each having accommodation for two prisoners. The first hearing was held on the day the building was opened and the Magistrates sat regularly for just short of 100 years before the court was closed with the last sitting being on 30th December 1998. Cases from then on were transferred to Bonney Street Court at central Blackpool.



*Lytham Magistrates' Court ceiling with one of two Red Rose stained glass leaded-lights.
(photo David Forshaw 30.06.2008)*

Even up to the 1950s / 60s facilities were being improved and enlarged at the Police Station with a number of buildings, workshops and stables down George Street being taken over and demolished to allow the station to be expanded with a plain 'modern' two storey office extension and yard with petrol pump and concrete garages.



*Lytham Magistrates Court Prisoners' Dock after closure
(photo Sue Forshaw 30.06.2008)*

The 1924 town listing even mentions a police station down Denmark Road, around the Dicky Bush off Woodlands Road. This was probably just a constable's house set up to receive enquiries like the one on the corner of Albany Road and Smithy Lane at one time but this needs further 'looking into'.

The first sign of looming closures in Police presence took place when Safeways Supermarket began negotiating to buy St Annes Police Station to allow their planned large store to be built over both sides of St Andrews Road North. This proposal was soon, not surprisingly, knocked on the head.

The value of land in Lytham to release house building plots had risen sharply with most of the town's

Lytham's New Police Station

industrial buildings succumbing to the assault. It is therefore not surprising that when looking round to release capital and reduce overheads, the police force decided to dispose of the far larger plot of land on which the Lytham Station and Court sat on rather than the St Annes Station. It is rather ironic that once sold the buildings and site remain untouched and un-developed to this day. The entire site was sold and then resold again to would be developers. A Police presence in the town was maintained by the opening of a "shop" and office on Clifton Street at No 23, next but one to the library / Institute on 20th February 2006. This however was short lived compared with its predecessor, its public counter closing on 1st October 2012 and the whole station in June 2014, the building then being converted back to shop premises.



Lytham Police Station, Clifton Street 03.02.2013 (David Forshaw)

The final Police premises closed at St Annes when first the public counter service ended in 2018 and the offices completely in 2019.

Members

Welcome to new member Maretta Fawcett of Thornton Cleveleys and to Mary Davies of Lytham and Jane Powell, Lytham St Annes.

Correction - We apologise for the misspelling of Mrs Alison Howarth's name on page 6 of the last issue.

JAMES HILTON, Lord of the Manor of Lytham



Squire James Hilton (photo Dave Hoyle)

Sadly we have to report the death of our member James Hilton, Lord of the Manor, on 9th October 2019 at the age of 90. Mr Hilton purchased the title 'Squire of Lytham' and the manorial rights from Squire Harry Clifton to prevent them being sold abroad. He also obtained many artefacts and records from the Clifton Estate which he generously lodged with the Lancashire Records Office at Bow Lane, Preston thereby allowing them to be accessible to the general public for research use.

Mr Hilton lived in Hastings Place and had been married to his wife Penelope for 63 years. The title 'Squire of Lytham' will pass to Mr Hilton's 26 year old grandson Hugo, a land and planning manager, who lives in the South of England. He is the son of Mr and Mrs Hilton's daughter Lady Katherine Bryan.

Mr Hilton's well attended funeral took place at St Cuthbert's on 2nd November 2019 after a procession from Hastings Place through the town centre. Our condolences go to the family on their loss.

Heritage Centre Exhibition

Hilary Fletcher

During 2019, approx 10,500 visitors enjoyed our wide variety of art exhibitions and an extremely detailed heritage story about the travels of John Talbot Clifton. This latest production took us on a tour of the world with a very brave Squire of Lytham, who roamed far away lands in an era when transport was quite primitive compared to modern day.

The climax of the year was a new venture which we hope will become a new tradition: the Christmas Fayre weekends. Several groups of local artists sold original works of art as Christmas presents and cards. The Centre had a very festive atmosphere which helped to draw in the shoppers.

2020 The annual Programme is included with this Antiquarian.


Bloom Award

Bloom Award for Heritage Centre


The Heritage Centre has been given a Silver Award in 2019 by Lytham in Bloom in the non commercial property group category.



The Lytham Heritage Centre garden Planter 2019



Lytham Heritage Group
Charity No 701152



'Our Land, Our Schools'


Artwork by pupils from
Primary Schools in Lytham St Annes

AKS Lytham Preparatory School
Clifton Primary School
Lytham C of E Primary School
Lytham Hall Park Primary School
Our Lady Star of the Sea RC Primary School
St Annes College Grammar School (5 - 11 yrs)
St Peter's Catholic Primary School
St Thomas' C of E Primary School

11 February to 1 March 2020
Tuesdays - Sundays 10.00am to 4.00pm

Lytham Heritage Centre
2 Henry Street, Lytham FY8 5LE
Telephone: 01253 730787

FREE ADMISSION DONATIONS WELCOME



New Venture

Hilary Fletcher

The new year will see another new venture beginning, with two exhibitions of artwork from schools:

- 11 February to 01 March: art from eight local primary schools
- 03 to 29 March: art from five Fylde secondary schools

This is an exciting start to the year and we welcome the opportunity to work with local education colleagues and exhibit some outstanding artwork. There will be prizes to be won and certificates awarded, to provide encouragement to the talented art students.

Future Events

Sue Forshaw

All the talks below are held in the Ribble Room at the Assembly Rooms, Lytham at 2.30pm unless stated otherwise.

Monday March 9th 2020

The Town Crier and the Manor of Lytham by Colin Ballard

We restart our programme of talks on March 9th with a talk by Colin Ballard. Colin has certainly been a local figure, hard to miss, for many years in the town. His booming voice and colourful outfit has made him stand out at important events as our much loved Town Crier. He has 'hung up his hat' on that part of his role and has undertaken several new duties within our community. One aspect of his former role was to work with the late Squire of Lytham, James Hilton, who has been succeeded by his grandson. Colin is continuing to support the new Squire and his talk will be related to that role. I am sure it will be an interesting and informative talk on a ceremonial role we may not know much about.

Monday April 6th 2020 starting at 1.15pm with a hot pot meal

Famous Literary Visitors to the Fylde by Gerry Wolstenholme

April sees the return of Gerry Wolstenholme whose talk this time is on the famous literary visitors to the Fylde which apparently included Charles Dickens - we shall look forward yet again to an interesting and amusing talk. You will note that the date is the first Monday of April and that is because the second Monday is Easter. We are including a Hot Pot lunch so **pre booking is vital** using the form later in this issue.

Please note - this event starts at 1.15pm onwards with the meal at 1.30pm to start the talk around 2.30pm. The Hot Pot will be accompanied by a dessert and will be £6 per head and £7 for non-members (£2 if hot pot not wanted).

Future Events *Sue Forshaw*

Monday May 11th 2020 Victorian St Anne's by Dave Hoyle
Our very own David Hoyle is giving an illustrated talk on Victorian St Anne's. So far we have not met Dave before he is in charge of our Archive Room in the Lytham Institute Building and is the author of the on line forum 'Lytham's Past'. He as always will have researched the topic thoroughly using both our Archive and his personal collection of material and again he will be both informative and amusing. Certainly a 'must go to' date for your diary as are all the others and I look forward to seeing you in the Ribble Room sometime this year.

Autumn Talks 2019

We concluded the year's social talks programme with two for the nostalgic amongst us. Both attracted audiences in excess of 30 and were well received. We have kept to our usual venue the Ribble Room in Lytham Assembly Rooms since the Library came back to town! The latter does not have an impact on us as they shut on a Monday afternoon although we often have to disappoint customers who come in to the building as they think it is! I must just say a big thank you to Leanne our liaison with Lytham Town Trust, via Stringers, for her help this year and although there are still some issues to be resolved such as a public notice board and permanent screen/audio visual facilities she is on the case! We will continue to use and support the venue in 2020 and the dates are all booked in.

October 14th 'More images of FY8'

David Forshaw gave his illustrated talk on yet more images of buildings and places from Lytham's past concentrating on the East End of Lytham as a focus including places of worship and the industrial side of the area. It showed how the town had some heavy industry now long gone. Interspersed with lighter ones such as the gas works which meant the town was a busy one during the mid-20th Century. Although some of these lighter industries remain in the area it is a shadow of its former self. Laurence, a RNLI volunteer with David, and his wife came to see some of the history of the town they chose to move to a couple of years ago. He commented to David later that on their walk home in that direction the two of them kept finding what is there now and referring back to what David had said and was fascinated by what they had found out - a satisfied customer!

November 11th 'We wish you a nostalgic Christmas'

Jennifer Ray came to see us again with her knowledge and enthusiasm for all things heritage. She is always amusing and certainly presses those nostalgia buttons. Her opening slide was of the tins of Quality Street over the decades since the 50's with their size being the obvious change, and they are even smaller this year, and the 'tins' are now made of that infamous material plastic! It might have been a bit early to be thinking of all things Christmas but the Lifeboat shops had been selling Christmas cards since June! She certainly put us in the Christmas spirit with a variety of slides and stories.



Booking form for the Hot Pot lunch April 6th.

Please complete the simple form below and return for the attention of Sue Forshaw to the Heritage Centre with your remittance by March 24th 2020. Please make cheques payable to 'Lytham Heritage Group'.

Name(s) _____

Contact details-phone _____ email _____

Payment - Member _____ Non- member _____

Any allergies/special requests _____

Contact Details



We welcome all queries and suggestions. Please send emails to

thecentre@lythamheritage.co.uk

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

Archive Dave Hoyle dave@davidhoyle.co.uk

Exhibitions Hilary Fletcher [via The Centre](#)

Social Events Sue Forshaw [via The Centre](#)

Windmill and Old Lifeboat House - Steve Williams steve.williams@lythamwindmill.co.uk