



## The Newsletter of the Lytham Heritage Group

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*Clifton Drive (c1905 -09) looking east with a tram on the newly electrified system. Lytham College (1901) is the first building on the left (still standing and converted into flats) followed by the "Tin Tab" Fairhaven Methodist Church, (soon to be replaced in 1910 by the current grand building) and the Rossendale Hotel (now a Nursing Home).*

*No sign yet on the right of the White Church which was completed in 1912.*

*(a postcard view)*

## Notes from The Chairman

Here we are approaching Autumn after a mixed summer of both weather and Government advice! In both instances we seem to have difficulties in making plans. As I mentioned last time, we are dedicating the Heritage Centre Garden to Alan Ashton and have set the date as Monday September 6th. Although the plaque has been up a while, with Covid protocols in place until August, I hope we will have the weather on our side. You will see the write up and article later in this edition. We had a visit recently from some judges with members of Lytham in Bloom. As I write this we have been nominated for an award. Hopefully I can announce it later in this issue if we have been successful.

Thankfully we have been able to get our venues up and running for most of the traditional school holidays and they have been well received. Visitor numbers are steady and hopefully this will carry through until the end of September for the museums. The Centre and Archive remain open at the usual times, the former until December with details on the remaining exhibitions for the year later in this edition. Dave Hoyle has remarked that few have taken the opportunity to visit the Archive since it was allowed to open. This has not been helped by a leak in the roof of the Institute building in mid-August when all entry was denied. Hopefully Fylde Borough Council, as Trustees of the Grade 2 listed building, will ensure a high degree of maintenance is in place for its preservation.

As our next edition will be in 2022, I wish you a more normal Christmas and New Year than last year with family and friends and one to celebrate.

*Sue Forshaw*

## Contents

Page 1

Notes from the  
Chairman

Page 2/3

On the Threshold  
of Progress

Page 4

AGM

Garden Dedication

Page 5

Exhibitions

Members

Christmas Meal

Page 6

Heritage Talks

Palace Letter

Page 7

Christmas Lunch  
Menu

Page 8

Contacts

Christmas Lunch  
Booking Form



# On the Threshold of Progress 250 Years Ago

by Dave Hoyle (edited from a Kathleen Eyre publication)

A few years earlier there had been a count up of inhabitants over the age of 16. There were 206, husbandmen mostly, a few yeomen, a 'shomaker' and a webster who supplied linen to the Hall. That was 1676. The old century dragged out its days and a new one opened which would bring terrible suffering and great expectations.

There might be revolutions elsewhere but 18th-century Lytham knew little about them and cared even less. The main problem was how to keep body and soul together and that was never easy for the poor.

The sea ensured most folk their meagre subsistence. Salmon then abounded, common as cod. Fishing stakes and balk nets were set up on the sands by the tenants. The ancient privilege was accompanied by frustrations. 'Every Fryday Morning all Fish that is taken with Nets ... belongs to ye Lord of Ye Manor; the Baliffe goes constantly to receive it and brings it to ye Hall'. On other days, the Bailiff took 'thereout what he thinks fit for ye Ld' and on Wednesday and Thursday evenings half the catch 'is but due'. Every tenth salmon taken 'with nets or other waies' was claimed by the Squire.

For the humble folk there was no certainty of a nourishing meal until it was safely tucked under the belt. It was hard watching the best going to the landowner's table and 'flooks' being purloined for his 'family catts'. Sometimes Warton people came to fish illicitly. Our old men made 'a great piece of work' over this kind of piracy and angrily removed the intruding nets, creating a disturbance.

The Main Channel, too, was a problem, continually shifting. Sometimes they had to walk out four miles from the shore to set up stake nets and as far back to set the catch before the plundering Bailiff. Courts Leet had to be attended. Offenders trembled as the 'Oyez, Oyez' rang out and hung their heads as their small misdoings were recited and punished before their neighbours. Fines could rise to 6s 8d, and 2d in those days was a day's wages for some poor woman working in the Lord's garden. In 1702, Nan Pass was paid 11 d for five-and-a-half days weeding and a further 4d for trudging to Singleton with a message for the miller. Money was hard come by. Lytham's poor jostled eagerly for Easter loaves doled out at church, all 18 of them, paid for by Squire Clifton at the cost of 1s 6d. But then he had cotton stockings to buy at 3s a pair and a body of servants to support. A manservant might get 15s a half-year and the Steward £6 per annum.

This Clifton nephew from Fairsnape in Bleasdale, who had inherited the old Baronet's estate in 1694, was a papist, like many others, and involved in Jacobite plottings before 1715. Perhaps he was too old and tired to join the rebels at Preston but it was rumoured that his son, young Thomas, went off with the Steward, Mr Mayfield, to support the Stuart cause. After the fiasco which reduced the Fylde gentry he fled the realm and cooled his ardours in France. The old Squire died in 1720 and that was a year imprinted with stark remembrance. A week before Christmas a storm blew up, unparalleled in violence. Mountainous seas boiled up, rushed in and devastated Lytham,

demolishing 40 houses, drowning cattle and inundating most of the farmlands, destroying winter corn. No human lives were lost in this parish, though terrified families had perched for two days in their rafters. The devastation was grievous. The loss was reckoned at £2,055.

It is difficult to imagine with what fortitude our people began the slow reclamation. At first there were hopes of a generous response to the Brief granted in 1721 by which subscriptions would be raised in churches throughout the country. But Briefs, like flag days, had become numerous and people were weary with giving. Lytham's eventual share of the proceeds was a meagre £103, a sum beyond the wit of a Solomon to disburse amongst families who had lost all. In an act of heroic self-sacrifice, these humble god-fearing people placed the money into a fund for educating poor children. Through 'The Lytham Charities' we have been blessed with fine schools ever since.

Years wore on and in 1734 that same Thomas Clifton who had lightly toyed with the 1715 Rebellion was brought to an early death leaving a sorrowing community, four daughters and a young son. This last, another Thomas, whose maternal ancestors came over with the Conqueror, was a lively lad whose presence greatly cheered the Lytham scene. He married, first, a remote kinswoman of mine, Catherine Eyre of Hassop in Derbyshire. Hassop Hall is still there and, until recently, an Eyre was living in it, but she, poor soul, died young, without progeny. His second wife, Ann, daughter of Sir Carnaby Haggerston, Bart, brought him two daughters. The third and surviving wife, by whom there were three daughters and one son, was the aristocratic Lady Jane Bertie (pronounced Bally), the Earl of Abingdon's daughter.

Thrice married Thomas Clifton rebuilt Lytham Hall to its present graceful proportions, a fire having destroyed much of the former building. John Carr was the architect and in 1751 work commenced on the reconstruction. The old servants' quarters at the rear were retained but the new Georgian manor house was probably the most impressive in the county.

Lytham folk would enjoy the multifarious comings and goings of eminent individuals and artisans, of fine furniture makers and artists and Italian plaster workers who fashioned the elaborate ceilings.

The work was finished in 1764. Squire Thomas, still in his thirties, was happy that year in the birth of his son and heir, John. But the parishioners had another cross to bear. Their ancient church was falling about their ears.

The old church was there before the priory and was built of sea cobbles. It had been patched and patched again but its thick walls now 'bulged out in some places near three feet from the perpendicular'. This lowly place with black oak seats and a drunken porch was 'so ruinous and decayed that it cannot any longer be kept up but the same with the steeple must be taken down and rebuilt'. A sum short of £1,400 was beyond the wit or means of Lythamers to raise being tormented with high rents and 'burdened with numerous poor'.

# On the Threshold of Progress 250 Years Ago

The best kind of Brief was secured, a walking Brief, by which ministers and churchwardens could knock on doors and 'collect alms and contributions' throughout Great Britain. Somehow the money was scraped together. The old church came down but fragments of the east and west walls were woven into the new fabric. The new St Cuthbert's was ready for use in 1770.

It, too, was small but sufficient, having a plain interior, oak benches and a sturdy tower with a single bell at the west end. Pewter flagons and 'plaits' sufficed for Communion. There were tablets on the walls, Clifton's in the vaults beneath. The whitewashed church was a useful landmark for sailors but the churchyard fence was a bone of contention. It would keep falling in, this mere mound of earth, and the parish was supposed to maintain it, but 'papists and some who are set on by them' would not countenance the old church stones being used for repair work.

Fortunately, there were occasional diversions. The Bellman made proclamations and on Saturdays at dusk reminded the faithful of their Sabbath day duties.

There was a flurry of activity at the weekly fish sales in the market place. The fishstones stood beside the village green, where now the Cenotaph rises, and the stocks were set up hard by, under a tree. There was a handy well where women exchanged gossip whilst filling their buckets, and a public oven close by. The Pinder went by, sometimes, taking a stray cow or pig found wandering on the common, to the pinfold. If unclaimed for a year and a day it belonged to the Lord.

A penniless minstrel wandered in occasionally and regretted it at a later Court Leet, but the mounted packman with bulging panniers was a welcome sight to housewives hard pressed for small items. They clustered with excited cries and examined his pack. Upon this innocent scene the Hall park gates looked down in dignity. They were sited then where the estate office now stands.

Most men spent their lives between tavern and waterfront. There were yarns to be spun by seamen who had 'sailed foreign' and wrecks to be watched for and reported to the Agent. Anyone finding wreckage on the sands and bringing it to the Hall was paid for his trouble. If unclaimed for a year and a day it was sold but, if claimed, 'it is given up on their paying salvage money'. Either way wrecks profited the landowner and there were enough to promote the building of a wreckyard (behind Hastings Place). The regular salvage sales provided further excitement.

Thomas Malley was Wreck Searcher and Bailiff until 1767. His two sons, Frank and Richard, followed on. They were required to go to vessels anchored off Lytham and collect 4d anchorage dues from each captain.

Young Dick Malley was a friend of Edward Parkinson, fisherman, who would fall, one day, to the press-gang and serve seven years on board a king's ship off America. He would return, at last, and take up the friendship. 'Come, Ned, some vessels have come in.... I must go and get the anchorage', Richard Malley would say, and they would go off together and the captains would pay up.

These were hard times. All had to pay for their year's fishing, some 10s, others 5s or 2s 6d. There were no roads in the township, only sandy tracks, deep-rutted, with stinking open ditches. There was common land stretching for acres but it was poor, parched and sandy, and they called it 'Hungry Moor'. Behind it lay the hamlet of Heyhouses and beyond it the community of Cross Slack. It was to the beach there that carts came for stones for repairs and house building. Always, the best boulders came from Cross Slack. Later, Liverpool flats would come over and pay 'Mr Clifton's people' £3 for 60 tons, but the inhabitants got them free.

Their homes were mere hovels, low, sagging, shaggily thatched and overcrowded, yet our healthy natives lived long unless hard drinking nipped them off early. There was schooling for some, poverty for all and there were mutterings about all these gamekeepers' cottages springing up on the estate. Hares and rabbits gambolled in multitudes, destroying crops, but it was dangerous now to trap a morsel for the stewpot, even in the wilderness of the West End (now modern St Annes). Sometimes our people wondered how they would live. They knew nothing yet about the revolution.

For years queer happenings had been rumoured in distant Blackpool. If one's ears could be believed, strangers were going there to bath in the sea and even to drink it! What madness! Everyone knew that bathing was a lewd and dangerous practice. Water washed all the natural oils from the body; and it was toilsome enough fetching it from the pump for cooking and brewing. It must be a joke!

It was no joke, though the story of the sea water craze is full of amusement. On the assumption that if spa water was beneficial, sea water was probably just as good (and there was more of it and it was easier to get too), progressive doctors in the 18th century sped the unwashed public to the coast. Dr Richard Russell of London was packing his patients off to Southampton or Brightelmstone (Brighton) from the 1750s. Armed with instructions and pills concocted from viper's flesh, crab's eyes, snails, tar and tincture of woodlice, they drank the prescribed 25 gallons of sea water, summoned up 'repose of the body and calmness of the mind' and flung their shivering naked bodies into the ocean, preferably when the moon was up, the wind was cool and goose pimples stood out like Alps. The lunatic craze was soon taken up by royalty and the aristocracy and within half a lifetime even the 'lower orders' were trundling, trotting or stumbling coastwards to join the great sea water revolution.

Many a maritime hamlet, like Lytham, was taken by surprise, but, by the 1770s, our ancient parish had been discovered and strangers fell in love with our fresh sea breezes and fair golden sands.

Old Hall-building Thomas Clifton died in 1783 at the dawning of a new era of hope and opportunity. Lytham stood on the threshold of great happenings, but they did not realise it yet, those fine courageous folks of the sand and the sea.

# Annual General Meeting 13th September 2021

After an absence of over 2 years, we convened at the Assembly Rooms once more. Attendance was quieter than usual which could have been for a variety of reasons. Business followed the prescribed path with updates and plans. The Chairman's report covered the last 20 months and included an update on the centre's progress with refurbishment details. In addition, I mentioned the dedication of Alan's Garden on the 6th September again something delayed by Covid. Probably some of you saw the coverage in the LSA Express and Gazette in the week following the event. This was followed by the Treasurers report by Mike Bell again for two years rather than the usual one. As we were not allowed to benefit from donations in our four sites as a result of lockdown, our main source of income was the membership fees. As we still needed a large amount year to run and update our facilities, we were anxious about the future. However, we were lucky enough to be eligible for grants from the government via Fylde Borough Council which covered those ongoing costs and the majority of the cost of the refurbishing of the Centre. The Executive Committee were all willing to stand again and there were no other nominations for those positions. All were unanimously voted as one to continue for another 12 months. There were 2 nominations for the co-opted members Phil Stringer and Peter Anthony. Phil gave an impromptu speech about his background in IT and the setting up by him of the new LHG website. Peter was absent due to another meeting. Both were individually voted for to join the Committee on a formal footing. There being no other business the meeting was closed.

Hopefully the AGM will be arranged for its usual time of the second Monday in June 2022.

*Sue Forshaw*

## Dedication of the Garden at the Heritage Centre

The event finally took place on Monday 6th September 2021 to dedicate the garden to our late Chairman and founder member Alan Ashton MBE. Although the plaque had been up for several months, restrictions necessitated the delay in the formal dedication of the space. Twenty five members of Alan's family attended, the Mayor of Fylde Cllr Elaine Silverwood, Trevor Mackey from Lytham in Bloom, Andrew Jackson from Bill's Ices, the current artist in residence Margaret Rodwell and members of the LHG Executive Committee. Trevor and Andrew had contributed to the garden with the planting and layout of the space in different ways to make a splendid display this summer. Fylde Borough as always put on a wonderful array of hanging baskets to enhance the space. The plaque was unveiled by Audrey Kirby our President and a response was given by David Ashton.

*Sue Forshaw*



*Ashton family members attending the unveiling of the plaque dedicating the Centre garden to founding Chairman Alan Ashton MBE  
(photo David Forshaw)*

*The Plaque in the Heritage Garden*



*At the plaque unveiling from left Margaret Rodwell (artist), Mayor of Fylde Council, Councillor Elaine Silverwood, David Ashton, LHG President Audrey Kirby, LPH Chairman Sue Forshaw  
(photo David Forshaw)*

# Heritage Centre Exhibitions Programme 2021

We reopened on 22 June and already we have held 3 exhibitions. Each one was successful in its own right and our artist exhibitors are very pleased with the results.

Joan Aitchison's exhibition in August was especially noteworthy, as she is very prolific and sold so many paintings, sketches, cards, tea towels and cushions. It was a very busy Centre for 3 weeks and we congratulate Joan on her success.

This was followed by "To Frame or Not to Frame?" mixed media paintings by Margaret Rodwell, a very popular Lytham artist. 30 Aug -19 Sep.



The rest of the Programme is as follows:

**21 Sept - 10 Oct**

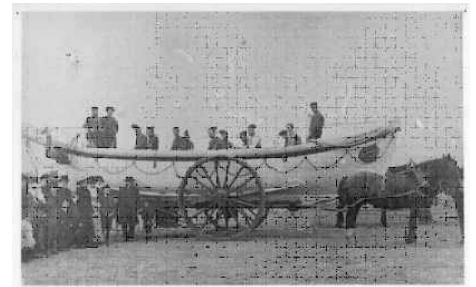
"Autumn Exhibition" by LSA Art Society.

**12 Oct - 28 Nov**

"The 'Mexico' Disaster" Lytham Heritage Group exhibition to commemorate the 135th Anniversary of the worst ever Lifeboat disaster that occurred locally on 9th December 1886.

**30 Nov - 05 Dec**

"Christmas Fayre Week" - buy original gifts by local artists and crafts people.



*Hilary Fletcher*

## Members

We are sorry to announce the passing away of Mrs Rimmer and Mrs Marion Ralph.



Paddling in the Mussel Tanks in the 1950s with the Lytham Swimming Baths in the background. Lytham St Annes Borough Council rented the western tank when it was closed during the summer when shellfish were out of season. This "added attraction" was replaced in 1961 by The Anchorage Café after the Council took over the site following its closure as a Purification Station. The use as a pool never looked over inviting and many used the Boating Pool on the other side of the Pier as a paddling pool much to the annoyance of model yacht owners. (photo Lytham Heritage Group)

*David Forshaw*

## Christmas Meal 2021

As I mentioned in my introduction, I would try to book a meal so the group can gather together to celebrate Christmas which we were unable to do last year. I have managed to book a slot at the Best Western Glendower Hotel, North Promenade, St Annes for Monday 13th December at 12.30 for a 1pm meal in the Lowther Room. We will have the use of the adjoining lounge from 12.30 onwards to have a pre lunch drink and a chat! I have included the menu and a slip to complete (back page) to be returned to me with the remittance no later than Monday 22nd November please as the hotel requires full payment before the date. There is a maximum capacity in the room of 35. Guests can attend but there will be an additional charge of £2.00 for non members as we have done before. We are hoping to have a bigger raffle on the day so any contributions would be very welcome. They can be dropped off at the centre for my attention at any time, brought to the talks in October and November in the Assembly Rooms or brought on the day of the meal. Thank you in anticipation and looking forward to seeing you again in a social setting.

*SueForshaw*

# Heritage Talks at the Assembly Rooms

It was a relief when we were given the green light to recommence the talks at the Assembly Rooms after a gap of 14 months. Although restrictions have been somewhat eased, we are still working to the protocols put in place by Lytham Town Trust and ourselves. Suggestions such as a maximum attendance of 20 and the need for one-way systems have been relaxed. The serving of refreshments hopefully will have recommenced at the AGM which is the last restriction we hope.

**David Hoyle** gave an illustrated talk on July 12th to 16 members and friends on the early history of the development of St Annes as a town at the end of the 19th Century. As usual the talk was very interesting and informative with Dave's quips and observations making for an amusing 40 minutes. The visual images were from both the LHG archive and Dave's own and gave a wonderful glimpse into the period which included illustrations of the costumes and transport of the era. What is familiar to those of us who have called this town home for some time, became a story which was much more than just the buildings. Hearing about the money troubles those early pioneers found themselves in it is a wonder the town ever developed into a thriving resort.

**David Forshaw** gave an illustrated talk on the Mexico disaster, which is in its 135th year, to 30 members and friends. We are holding a Heritage Exhibition in the Centre on the disaster from October 12th until November 28th and the talk was an introduction to this. As I tend to be his "button presser" I have seen the presentation many times before. However, from his extensive archive almost all the images shown were new to me.

We had a direct descendant of one on the men from the Lytham Boat, all of whom survived and rescued all the crew of the Mexico, in the audience. She is Christine Barrow who's relative was Coxswain Thomas Clarkson who won a silver medal from the RNLI for his bravery that night. It will always be the worst loss of RNLI volunteer Lifeboatmen ever from the St Annes and Southport boats, but good did come out of it. The most notable is the "invention" of street collections as we know them. In October 2021 Manchester is hosting a RNLI event in St Ann's Square to commemorate the 120th anniversary of the first street collection. The first was organised by Charles Macara a prominent businessman who lived in our town. Other charities saw how successful it was and gradually introduced their own versions of the "street collection".

## Future talks

We have 2 more talks this year and a Christmas meal.

**Peter Anthony** is talking about the wonderful work he is doing at Lytham Hall and the plans for the future. This will be at the usual time 2.30pm in Lytham Assembly rooms on October 11th.

**Brian Topping** is talking about life as a Customs Officer and the funny, deceitful and sometimes sad aspects of the job. I have heard him before and he tells a good tale so do come along for an interesting afternoon. It is being held on November 8th also at 2.30pm in Lytham Assembly Rooms.

*Sue Forshaw*

# Buckingham Palace Letter found in Lytham Loft

A lady called Heather Taylor has donated to the Group's Archives a framed letter and envelope from Buckingham Palace to a Mr H E Rogers in 1911. She believes he was in the army at some point. It was written by the Private Secretary (Lord Knollys) on behalf of King George V, thanking Mr Rogers for a letter that he had sent to the king.

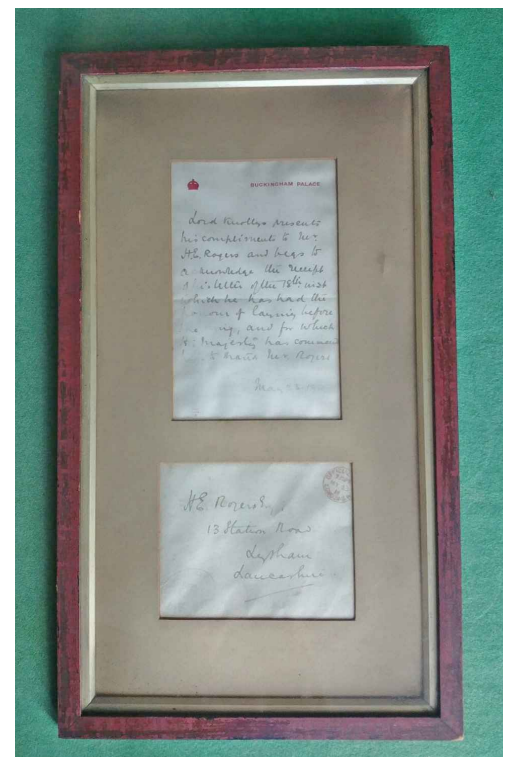
The item was found in a house, 29 Mythop Ave, Lytham, that was done up and sold on by Mrs Taylor. It is believed the daughters of Mr Rogers lived in this house for many years.

The letter is Addressed to H.E Rogers, 13 Station Road, Lytham It is dated 23rd May 1911. This is what the Letter says

*"Lord Knollys presents his compliments to Mr H E Rogers and begs to acknowledge the receipt of his letter of the 18th inst. which he has the honour of laying before the king and for which His Majesty has commanded him to thank Mr Rogers"*

If anyone has any information about the letter, Mr H.E.Rogers or his letter to the King, or the houses at 13 Station Road and 29 Mythop Avenue please contact Dave Hoyle at the Centre or email . Any information, however small, may help to piece together the story. Thank you.

*David Hoyle*



# Christmas Lunch Menu

Monday 13th December 2021, 12.30 for 1pm at the Best Western Glendower

*Choose one from each section please*

## STARTER

Sweet potato butternut squash soup  
Root vegetable crisp, herbed cream

Duck liver, whiskey & apricot pate  
Caramelised onion, beetroot & red onion, toasted brioche

Mixed seafood tartlet  
Cheesy mash topping, pea puree

Roasted vegetable & wild mushroom terrine  
Tomato coulis, micro shoots

## MAIN COURSE

Roasted breast of turkey  
Pigs in blankets, sausage meat stuffing, festive vegetables,  
rich pan gravy

Slow roasted blade of beef  
Horseradish mash, medley of seasonable vegetables,  
port & veal jus

Parma ham wrapped cod loin  
Herb crushed new potatoes, Mediterranean vegetables,  
rich tomato & basil sauce

Spinach, cranberry & mixed nut roast  
Fondant potato, vegetable panache, mushroom gravy



## DESSERT

Traditional Christmas pudding  
Cranberry compote, rich brandy sauce

Individual chocolate & cherry torte  
Winter berries, cocoa cream

Gingerbread cheesecake  
Butterscotch drizzle, caramel crunch ice cream

Apple & raspberry frangipane  
Fruit coulis, vegan ice cream

*Includes coffee or tea*



£19.95p per head      non member guests £21.95p  
(this does not include a tip for the staff if you wish to give one)

*Please complete booking form overleaf*

# 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.

Archive - Dave Hoyle [dave@davidhoyle.co.uk](mailto:dave@davidhoyle.co.uk)

Exhibitions - Hilary Fletcher [via The Centre](#)

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

Press & Publicity - Peter Anthony [via The Centre](#)

Windmill and Old Lifeboat House - Steve Williams  
[stephenm.williams@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:stephenm.williams@hotmail.co.uk)

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## Christmas Lunch

This is to be held at the Glendower Hotel, North Promenade  
on Monday 13th December 2021 at 12.30pm for 1.00pm

Please complete the form below for your choices and return with payment to the Heritage Centre for the attention of Sue Forshaw

by Monday 22nd November at the latest

Cost - £19.95 and £21.95 for non-members

Please make cheques payable to "Lytham Heritage Group"

.....  
Name(s) .....

No in party ..... Members ..... Non members .....

Address .....

Postcode ..... Phone number ..... E mail (*preferable*) .....

Starter ..... Main ..... Dessert .....

.....

.....

.....

I enclose a cheque for £ ..... for ( ) members + ( ) guests