



## Friends of Smithills Hall



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## FRIENDS BULLETIN No. 20

### Spring 2015

#### Friends of Smithills Hall Executive Committee

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### Introduction

Welcome to the latest Bulletin. In this edition is an account of a garden party in 1939 which far surpasses anything that can currently be staged. The next **Garden Party** is on **Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July** – more details will be given nearer the date either in the next Bulletin or on the Friends website. Please come along and enjoy the atmosphere.

The **Armour** I thought was only dress armour of the 19<sup>th</sup> century turns out to be

of about 1620. It is being renovated and details are included in this bulletin.

**The Woodland Trust** is trying to raise £3.5m by the end of 2015 to match fund a £3.5m grant to buy the 'Smithills Estate'. A report is included in this Bulletin.

The '**Timeline**' being installed in the old kitchen will be previewed by members of the Friends on **Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May** from 1.30 – 3.30pm. Come and join us for this exclusive event. A note about this will be included with your AGM papers and some notes are on page 4.

## *“Success of Mayor’s Garden Party”*

From the Bolton Journal Guardian 18<sup>th</sup>  
August 1939 [copy kindly provided by  
Margaret Koppens]

### **“Councillors Triumph in Cricket Match**

**A** most successful and enjoyable day was the consensus of opinion from the Mayor’s garden party at Smithills Hall, which opened on Wednesday and is to be continued tomorrow. The proceeds are for the Mayor’s 50,000 shilling fund on behalf of the Royal Infirmary and the Bolton & District Nursing Association. Wednesday’s actual paid attendance at the entrance gates was 6,082; 5,313 adults and 769 children. In addition to these many people were admitted by tickets which had been on sale at various agencies prior to the event.

The result of the cricket match between a team of Town councillors and members of the Town Hall staff, captained by Counc. Talbot and the Town Clerk, Mr P S Rennison respectively, was in the nature of a surprise, the councillors completely routing their opponents with a wicket to spare.

#### **Grounds at Their Best**

The history of Smithills Hall is widely known among Bolton people, and older portions of the hall including the chapel and the spot where George Marsh, martyr, is reputed to have left his footprint, were visited by most people who attended the garden party. The grounds are in splendid condition and the lawns and gardens at their best, and not a few visitors were content to explore the grounds or sit in a quiet spot and admire the hall and gardens.

It is expected that attendance at tomorrow’s party will be more than double that of Wednesday. Additional attractions are to be provided by the Auxiliary Fire Services, the parade of rose queens, organised by Mrs Frank Young, riding by the Duke of Lancaster’s Own Yeomanry, in addition to the sketch given by the St

Bede’s British Legion players and the entertainment by the Bolton Amateur Operatic Society. Additional bands are to be provided and for the guidance of visitors a timetable of events is being compiled, so that the attractions, as they are presented will be known. The actual sum taken at the gates was £142.8s”

## *In Memory - David Lee*



**14<sup>th</sup> January 1942 – 24<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

Our sympathy is extended to Committee member Dorothy Lee on the loss of her husband David who was also a Friend of Smithills Hall. He will be greatly missed.

## *Armour Cleaning*

**T**he armour located in the Great Hall (see photograph) has been identified by a curator from the Royal Armouries in Leeds as a London-made pikeman’s corselet circa 1620. The helmet is described as a Civil War ‘Morion’ helmet (also known as the pikeman’s pot) and is associated with the New Model Army, one of the first professional militaries. The helmet together with the breastplate and buff coat was also worn with a back plate, a gorget to protect the neck and a pair of thigh defences called tassets. Pikemen stood in phalanx-like pike and shot

formations, protecting the flanks of the unarmoured musketeers.

The armour will form part of the new exhibition being developed for the old kitchen area and the servant's corridor depicting 700 years of history based around the Hall using a 'timeline' approach. Watch for publicity about this nearer the completion date – expected early summer. This is likely to be an exciting development and worthy of a visit to see progress made.



Pikeman's corselet & helmet

The condition, as can be seen from the photograph of the armour Smithills Hall, is poor with clear signs of rust.



Work on cleaning the armour began on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> February and will take a couple of weeks to complete. The Bolton Council Conservator Pierrette Squires began by

cleaning the helmet with natural bristle brushes. When the rust and dirt are cleaned off and Microcrystalline Wax will be applied to give surface protection once the armour has been cleaned. The helmet has a mark indented on the rim which may be a manufactures mark.



Pirrette begins her work



A young visitor takes a close interest

## *Woodland Trust*

**T**he Woodland Trust, a leading UK conservation charity, plans to buy the 1,700 acre 'Smithills Estate' from Bolton Council. To do so they need to raise £3.5m by the end of 2015. They say that they will revitalise the land for wildlife and people. The estate would be restored and maintained by the charity, with improved and extended free public access a priority. Smithills Hall is bottom right of the map on page 4 and Smithills Dean Road is marked (the detail shown is the area to be purchased}.

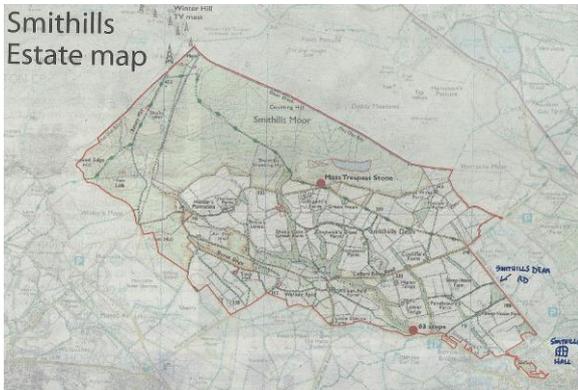


# WOODLAND TRUST

The Trust proposes to increase the tree cover by more than double. Trees currently cover less than 10%

of the land, mostly in ravines or cloughs. The Trust proposes to restore the woodland replacing conifers with native broadleaf species providing ideal habitat for wildlife in the area'

As I reported in Bulletin 19 the Trust are consulting about the purchase and their proposals, and have recently had public meetings in the Bolton Central Library and at Smithills Hall. Additionally they have had a 4 page 'advertising' feature in the Bolton Journal (a free weekly local paper) including detail of wildlife threatened through the decline and neglect of the land. They feature wildlife at risk and how they will ensure the land is appropriately managed. They are also sending individual appeals by post to members of the public.



Area to be purchased

## Timeline Preview

An exclusive unveiling of the **Timeline** for members will be held at Smithills Hall on **Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May from 1.30 – 3.30pm.**

The work on the displays continues apace but to give you a flavour of how it looks to be developing there follows a brief description which may be subject to change.

The **MAIN KITCHEN** area will house the Timeline illustrating 700 years in text and

objects around the room. Each significant year will have appropriate texts/objects. **THE BUTTERY** will house a working life section. The small area between the Buttery and the main kitchen will house the **SHUTTLEWORTH ACCOUNTS** compiled whilst at Smithills Hall. Extracts from the Shuttleworth accounts of the 16<sup>th</sup> century will be displayed and an image of Richard Shuttleworth of Gawthorpe Hall will be shown, courtesy of Lord Shuttleworth. The **SERVANTS CORRIDOR** will have interpretation panels.

This will be a much awaited enrichment of the visitor experience.



The Main Kitchen

## 2015 Dates for your diary AGM

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June.

Speaker Brian Allanson (former Mayor) on 'The day the Queen came to Bolton'

### Garden Party

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July

### Wreath Laying

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November

### Christmas Social

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December.

Speaker Joanne Halliwell on 'Christmas in the big house with Betsy'

### Christmas Carols

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December

Please attend as many of these events as you can. You will be most welcome. We need your support.

More detail will be posted, placed on the website and in future Bulletins