



Friends of Smithills Hall



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FRIENDS BULLETIN 42

Winter 2020/01

Friends of Smithills Hall Executive Committee

Chairman: David Williams, Vice Chairman: Joan Sheppard, Secretary: Sue Priest, Treasurer: Wendy Edwards, Members: Ruth Ellison, Dorothy Lee, Elaine Fletcher-Cowen, Margaret Koppens

“Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is time for home.” – Edith Sitwell

Introduction

Welcome to the latest edition of the Friends of Smithills Hall Bulletin. I hope you are keeping well.

The Hall gardens remain open for strolling, dog walking and exercise with a bonus that, although the Hall is closed, staff can provide you with a welcome cup of tea or coffee and snacks, from a stall near the rear door of the Hall from 10am to 2pm every day of the week. Our volunteers have continued to keep the garden flower beds in tip top condition.

I hope that all members have received their copy of **‘The Sale of The Smithills Hall Estate’** booklet which was produced using files held by Bolton Council in their Archives. These were sent out to all members in early December 2020. Any members who have not received a copy please let me know. DW

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Sheriff of Lancashire

Bulletin 40 recounted the appointment of Richard Henry Ainsworth to the position of Sheriff of the County of Northamptonshire. Member Malcolm Howe has kindly let me have some supplementary information about Sheriffs of Lancashire.



With reference to the special appointments relating to the county palatine of Lancaster, the right to nominate and select high sheriffs in Lancashire is vested in the monarch in right of the Duchy of Lancaster. Before 1974, this right applied only to the High Sheriff of Lancashire, but since the boundary changes of the Local Government Act 1972 (effective 1974), the High Sheriff of Greater Manchester and High Sheriff of Merseyside also come under the jurisdiction of the Duchy of Lancaster



Mrs Catherine Penny. High Sheriff of Lancashire, of Dutton Hall, Ribchester 2020

As with other counties in England, three names are nominated for each of these three counties to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster for Lancashire appointments; the Chancellor presents these to the Monarch with his recommendation in a private audience.¹

¹ A small sharp pointed tool, dagger or blunt needle

The Queen as Duke of Lancaster then pricks with a bodkin¹ this vellum list selecting the first named, after having already pricked the earlier vellum list covering all the other counties except Cornwall.


Before Capital Punishment was abolished the High Sheriff in person was required to be present at executions.

Albert Parker

It is with great sadness that we have heard of the death of a long-time member of the Friends', Albert Parker. Albert died on the 21st November 2020 aged 96. He was well respected in the local community and was a founder member and speaker at Turton Probus Club.

He will be very much missed.

Supporting the Friends

 The Friends of Smithills Hall charity has registered with **smileamazon** to be available to benefit from Amazon donations to us as a charitable organisation but at no cost to you.

Smileamazon is a website operated by Amazon.com that lets customers buy as normal, but customers select a charity to benefit from a no cost donation from eligible purchases (0.5% of purchases excluding VAT, returns and shipping fees). Although these are usually small amounts the combination of customers selecting the Friends for donations will make a modest contribution to our charitable activities.

The link below will take you to the appropriate Amazon web page.

<https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1038507-0>

Thank you for your support.

Book Recommendation

'MOORLANDS, MEMORIES AND REFLECTIONS'

By Paul Salverson

A hundred years ago, Allen Clarke brought out his Lancashire classic, 'Moorlands and Memories'. This book is a celebration of an unjustly neglected work which extolled the beauties, history and people of the West Pennine Moors. Clarke's book was conversational, philosophical, entertaining and lyrical. Paul Salverson's celebration covers some of the ground that Allen Clarke wrote about – handloom weavers, dialect writers, the Winter Hill 'mass trespass', links to Walt Whitman and that fearsome creature, the boggart. He discusses Clarke's links with Tolstoy and his attempts to 'get back to the land' and the great Barrow Bridge picnic in support of the locked-out Bethesda quarrymen.

Clarke was both keen cyclist and walker. His original book includes rides and rambles through Rossendale and Pendle as well as around Rivington, Belmont and Edgworth, with associated tales. Paul adds in some stories from the last hundred years including 'summer evenings with old railwaymen' at Entwistle and Gandhi's visit to Lancashire.

The book is priced at £21 (plus £3 postage) and is available from Paul by sending a cheque to 109 Harper's Lane, Bolton BL1 6HU or email info@lancashireloominary.co.uk

Christians Awake! Salute the Happy Morn

This appeared to be an appropriate piece for this post-Christmas Bulletin. Some of you may know this



story but I hope it will remind you and others of the Smithills Hall connection to this carol.

The famous Anglican Christmas carol *Christians Awake Salute the Happy Morn* was first written as a poem by John Byrom.

John Byrom (1692-1763) was the nephew and son-in-law of Joseph Byrom, who owned Smithills hall in the mid 1700's, and was one of the tallest men in the kingdom.²

John Byrom was a talented 18th Century man of letters and a regular visitor at Smithills Hall. He wrote this poem in 1745 for his little daughter Dorothy. Prior to Christmas she had been pestering him to write her a carol. On Christmas morning she ran down to breakfast and found several presents awaiting her. Among them was an envelope addressed to her in her father's handwriting. It was the first thing she opened and, to her great delight, it proved to be a Christmas Carol entitled

² Albert Edward Bailey 1950

“Christians Awake Salute the Happy Morn”. The original manuscript was headed with ‘*Christmas Day for Dolly*’. The music was composed by J. Wainwright and was first published in Harrop’s *Manchester Mercury* in 1746. According to tradition it was sung for the first time in the Chapel at Smithills Hall.

The first verse is: -

***Christians, awake, salute the happy morn
Whereon the Saviour of the world was born
Rise to adore the mystery of love
Which hosts of angels chanted from above
With them the joyful tidings first begun
Of God incarnate and the Virgin’s Son***

Byrom invented a system of shorthand which he taught and patented³ as his *New Universal Shorthand*. This system of shorthand, officially taught at Oxford and Cambridge Universities, was used by the Clerk of the House of Lords.

He is also remembered for his epigrams and, above all, his coinage of the phrase *Tweedledum and Tweedledee* (in connection with a dispute about the merits of two composers, George Frideric Handel and Giovanni Bononcini)

Income and Expenditure Account for 1 May 2019 to 30 April 2020

Members: If you receive this Bulletin in the post you will find a copy of the accounts enclosed. If you get this Bulletin digitally the Accounts will be as an attachment to the email.

This accounting year included the beginning of lockdown in 2020 but most of our normal activities had been completed by then.

Overall, our income dropped slightly by £110 (-5%) but our expenditure also reduced by £478 (-28%) leaving us a surplus of £393 (£27 last year). We are in a healthy position with funds of £11,243 slightly up on last year.

When the lockdown ends these funds leave us well placed continue to support activities and enhancements in and around the Hall. When the general public are again able to enter the Hall, and outdoor events can resume we will, through, our excellent volunteers, restock the gardens where required, and support the Council with indoor and outdoor activities, both with volunteers and contributions to costs.

My thanks go to David Smethurst for his audit and Wendy Edwards for looking after our financial affairs in what have been very trying times.

Some Trivia

‘Have you ever wondered why’.

Have you ever wondered why men’s clothes have buttons on the right-hand side of their clothing whilst women’s clothes have buttons on the left?

It is thought to be because: -

when buttons were invented, they were very expensive and worn primarily only by those who could afford them. Since most people were right-handed, it was easier to push button on the right through holes on the left. Because wealthy women were predominantly dressed by maids, dressmakers put the buttons on the maid’s right. And that’s where women’s buttons have remained ever since!

³ On 16th June 1742 King George II gave Byrom the sole right of publishing the art and method of shorthand writing invented by him, for 21 years.