



# Friends of Smithills Hall



Patron: The Duke of Norfolk    President: Sir William Goring Bt.  
Smithills Hall\*Smithills Dean Road\* Bolton\*Lancashire\*BL1 7NP  
Tel (01204) 338722 Registered Charity No. 1038507

[www.friendsofsmithillshall.co.uk](http://www.friendsofsmithillshall.co.uk)



## FRIENDS BULLETIN 44 *Summer* 2021

Friends of Smithills Hall Executive Committee: **Chairman:** David Williams, **Vice Chairman:** Joan Sheppard, **Secretary:** Sue Priest, **Treasurer:** Wendy Edwards, **Members:** Ruth Ellison Janette Rix, Margaret Koppens

*“Summer is the annual permission to be lazy. To do nothing and have it count for something. To lie in the grass and count the stars. To sit on a branch and study the clouds.” — Regina Brett*

### Introduction

Welcome to the Summer edition of your newsletter. I hope you are well. We have continued to communicate through the post, on the website and via Zoom to keep you advised of developments and will continue to do so. We, like everyone else, are

hopefully looking forward to a time when we can safely, and confidently, resume our activities, as they were before the pandemic.

### Contents

- Article: Municipal Engineer, December 1961
- Some Trivia
- New signage
- Hall Garden Benches
- Annual General Meeting 2021



**Municipal Engineer, December 1961 article by J Ellison**, MinstWHS, works manager, Bolton CBC.

This document was donated by Ann Popovich whose grandfather, E P Hulme, was senior carpenter on the project described below.

” Works of interest: The variety of works encountered during the maintenance of public buildings provides an interest peculiar to each individual building.”

“I relate in this paper what I consider to be one of the most interesting works with which it has been my good fortune to be associated.

I refer to the restoration of a 14<sup>th</sup> century building known as Smithills Hall, work on which began some ten years ago. The Hall, scheduled as an ancient monument, will be opened to the public on completion.

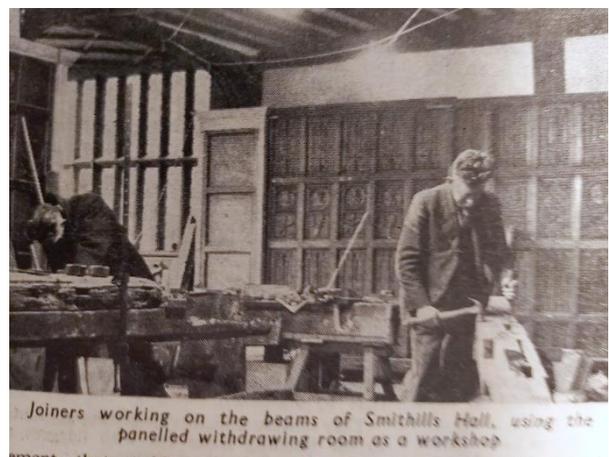
The work has already cost more than £13,000 of which £5,00 has come from the Ministry of Works, and £1,000 from the Pilgrim Trust\*.

The work has not been merely that of renewing rotted woodwork and strengthening bulging walls, but of restoring the centuries old buildings so that they are as near as possible to the original, shaping and cutting beams, window sections, etc, with the aid of adzes, a tool nowadays rarely used.

Most of the panelling, taken down, matched up and replaced, dates back to the first quarter of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. A square bay had to be completely demolished and rebuilt.

The adjoining chapel, rebuilt during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, after being destroyed by fire, is now once again used as a place of worship, being rededicated in December, 1957, after extensive repairs and renovation.

Amongst other things, the chapel roof timbers were completely replaced, and a main beam taken out and replaced by an *in-situ* reinforced beam, incorporating the heads of angels, and finally faced with timber



Thanks: My thanks are due to Denis M McKellen, Esq, MICE, MIMUNE,

borough engineer and surveyor, Bolton County Borough council for permission to prepare and present this paper.”

### **\*The Pilgrim Trust**

The Pilgrim Trust was established over 80 years ago (1940's) with an endowment of £2m. The trust deed stated that the donor, Edward Stephen Harkness, wished the funds to be used for some of Great Britain and Northern Ireland's 'more urgent needs'. It left the Trustees the power to make some interesting decisions about what to fund.

### **Some Trivia**

#### **WHY**

Why do X's at the end of a letter signify kisses?

#### **BECAUSE**

In the Middle Ages, when many people were unable to read or write, documents were often signed using an X. Kissing the X represented an oath to fulfil obligations specified in the document. The X and kiss eventually became synonymous.

### **Swinger Sign**

The Friends have commissioned this two sided sign designed to promote membership of the Friends, on one side, and details to encourage the recruitment of garden volunteers shown on the other. This sign will be on display in the Parterre



This sign can also be used to give information on special days eg. The Annual Garden Party, Heritage Weekends and other events attracting members of the public.

In the background of the photographs you can see the obelisks recently

donated to us to enable us display plants.

### **Hall Garden Benches**

Our thanks to Bolton Council for repairing the public benches around the Hall and now repainting them They look good, as does Reggie!.



### **Annual General Meeting**

On Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June the Friends of Smithills Hall Annual General Meeting was held via Zoom. Although last year's was held with the Executive Committee present, this year's was open to members being the first in this format and hopefully the last. We all hope that we can hold the next in the Hall with a speaker, buffet and drinks to enable us to have a more social event. However, may we extend our thanks to those members who came digitally to

support us. We were joined by our President Sir William Goring from his home in North Sussex.

The Chairman gave his report (copies of which were sent to all members prior to the event) thanking all those who had helped the Friends through a difficult twelve months and members who had stayed with us even though our social activities had had to be cancelled. He hoped that members found the Bulletins interesting and informative, were aware of and able to look at the website which had been kept up to date.

Secretary Sue Priest reported that we had 91 members and reported that postal renewals notices had been delayed because of restricted access to our offices at the Hall. Treasurer Wendy reported on our financial position. (A copy of the accounts is being sent with this Bulletin).

The Committee were re-elected except for Dorothy Lee who had asked to stand down due to other commitments. Janette Rix, former Hall Manager, was elected and welcomed to the Committee.

Sir William addressed the group after the meeting and talked about his uncle John Francis Ainsworth who was former President of the Friends who travelled from his home in Chichester to attend AGMs, and died in 2005.