



.....Friends of Smithills Hall.....



Patron: The Duke of Norfolk President: Sir William Goring Bt.
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FRIENDS BULLETIN 47 *Spring* 2022

Chairman: David Williams, Vice Chairman: Joan Sheppard, Secretary: Sue Priest, Treasurer: Wendy Edwards, Members: Ruth Ellison Janette Rix Paul Lomas

“Spring makes its own statement, so loud and clear that the gardener seems to be only one of the instruments, not the composer.”

– **Geoffrey B. Charlesworth**

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Christmas

Carol Service

After a break last year, the Friends held their annual Carol Service in the Hall

Chapel on Wednesday 15th December 2021. An invitation was sent out to all members. The Service was led by the Rev. David Wolstenholme and Friends' member Rev. Michael Taylor. There were favourite carols and a series of readings from David Williams, Joan Sheppard, Dorothy Lee, Roger Hayes and Ann Marie Elliott Clark, about the events leading up to Christmas. The congregation were then invited to see the Hall rooms decorated for Christmas, by the Friends before meeting in the Dome Room for mulled wine, fruit juices and mince pies and conversation.

Hall Decorations

Also, at the Hall this Christmas, the Council provided a wide range of activities and amusements for children and parents which received wide support. The Dining Room and the Devey Room were decorated with Christmas trees, each one covered in lights and festive parcels.

The Friends' volunteers decorated the White Withdrawing Room, The Green Room and the Tudor Withdrawing Room in appropriate period decoration. Thank to those of you who came to help including Dorothy, Paul, Alison, Ann Marie, Alun and David.

Five performances of '**A Christmas Carol**' were given in the Great Hall.

One on Friday 11th December, two on Saturday 12th and two on Sunday 13th.



The performances were by a theatre company called 'A Place for Us' and were supported by a wind trio. The audience had mince pies, Iced Jammy Reindeer biscuits, mulled

wine prior to the performance, which was well received, and in which they were able to participate in true pantomime fashion.

The Barrow Bridge Chimney

Built in 1863, the octagonal brick-built Barrow Bridge chimney was part of the power system of the old Halliwell Bleach works. The works were founded in 1739 by Peter Ainsworth and acquired a reputation in the early 19th Century for the early use of chlorine gas in the bleaching process, under the direction of Richard Ainsworth.

The chimney is now a local landmark and a listed Grade II building. At around 246 feet tall (but was originally 306 feet and was reduced in height three times). The chimney at Barrow Bridge is visible for miles around and is appealing due to its now rural setting, unlike other preserved remains of the Industrial age. Visitors to Moss Bank Park are treated to a good view and this was an ideal place from which to observe peregrines when they made their home on the ledge near the top of the chimney.

There is a well preserved and very interesting brick flue system that leads almost to the base of the chimney. The flue used to access the base of the chimney from two points

but the second part of the flue tunnels was blocked by deliberate collapse during the time the chimney was



refurbished and repaired – possibly in the 1990's. The left-hand section led to the base of the Barrow Bridge chimney, the right-hand tunnel led down to a smaller chimney or other circular structure further down the valley side.

Around the area of the chimney are a few remains of the old bleachworks, and later metal works, including large stone troughs and the exposed end of a stone aqueduct system. The aqueduct appears to have been fed from the reservoir pond which was in turn fed from the old 'canal' system at Moss Bank Park – across the road.

The exploits of local man Fred Dibnah are well recorded. Aged 17 he climbed the chimney for a 10-shilling bet. During the night he took two Union flags to the top and secured each to the lightning conductors. He had subsequently maintained the chimney, carrying out significant repairs in 1996 to

patch up the top of the chimney.



There is now a small mortar plaque (see photograph) on the side of the chimney to record the work. The chimney was inspected in 2007, sadly not by Fred Dibnah who passed away in 2004.

This chimney is part of the Ainsworth legacy.

Trivia

Why?

Why do people clink their glasses before drinking a toast?

Because

In earlier times it used to be common for someone to try to kill an enemy by offering him a poisoned drink. To prove a guest that a drink was safe, it became customary for a guest to pour a small amount of their drink into the glass of the host and both persons would drink simultaneously. When a guest trusted his host, he would only touch or clink the host's glass with his own.

SmileAmazon

The Friends of Smithills Hall has registered with smileamazon to be able to benefit from

Amazon donations to charitable organisations. If you are an Amazon customer you can select the Friends when buying from them. You buy as normal, nominate the Friends, and Amazon donates 0.5% of purchase less VAT to us.

You can use this link to take you to the appropriate webpage: -

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

To date Amazon has made four small payments, totalling £34.62, to our funds.

Committee volunteers

We are looking for members to join us on the Committee. Can you spare a couple of hours per month to help us? You will be made very welcome.

Please talk to any committee member for information.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held at the Hall on **Wednesday 15th June** starting at 1pm. There will be a buffet, the AGM followed by a speaker Paul Salveson who will talk about Allen Clarke (1863-1935) Lancashire's Romantic Radical.

Full details will be sent to you. We would be very happy to see you at the Hall on this first 'in person' meeting since 2019.