

# THE ANTIQUARIAN

The occasional newsletter of the Lytham Heritage Group

ISSUE No.41

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## Seasonal Greetings

The Editor and Production Team of *The Antiquarian* extend to all our members their best wishes for A Happy and Prosperous New Year.

## A Memorial

A gap in the heart of old Lytham will be filled in a most worthwhile way next year.

In memory of his much-loved wife Edna, who died in July 1994, our Founder President and immediate Past President, Stanley Brown, is to donate a clock to go over the doorway of our very own Lytham Heritage Centre - the former TSB Bank premises at the corner of Dicconson Terrace and Henry Street.

Stanley explained "With the disappearance of two public clocks in the vicinity, i.e. at the Black Horse Estate Agency and at the former Post Office, I felt that there was a need for another clock to supplement that at the nearby Market Hall".

His suggestion was eagerly accepted by your Committee, and our Heritage Group Honorary Architect, Keith Hunt, has agreed to design the clock face.

It is to be hoped that the timing of its installation (if you will forgive the pun) should coincide with the formal opening of the Centre in the early Spring.

This grand opening will include a most interesting exhibition on a topic dear to the hearts of Lythamers - and by this I mean not only those who are native-born, but also those friends who have joined us from outside the area. The exhibition will centre on Lytham Hospital which, starting out as the Lytham Cottage Hospital, has recently celebrated its 125th Anniversary. The Group was happy to accept a request by the Friends of Lytham Hospital to stage this exhibition in our new premises.

We are equally happy to thank Stanley for his generous gesture.

R.M.

## The new Heritage Centre - a Progress Report

A Working Party, established to oversee the necessary alterations to the premises has concluded its deliberations, Honorary Architect Keith Hunt has prepared the necessary plans and the Fylde Borough Council has now granted the necessary Planning Permission.

Work is to start early in the New Year, and it is hoped that it will be completed before Easter, in time for the Opening Exhibition on the History of Lytham Hospital, promoted by the Friends of Lytham Hospital.

## The Barge

Sometimes referred to by Lythamers as the Houseboat, the Barge was permanently anchored in the river just off Church Scar (an outcrop of mussel-covered boulder clay visible at low water on the foreshore between Seafield Road and Fairlawn Road), close to where today's Lifeboat is anchored.

Its original and primary function was to act as a look-out post and telephone link (before radio) with Preston Dock. Its watchman, who lived aboard, was there to warn the Harbour Master and lock-keepers at the dock at tide-time of any late arrivals from sea. The vessel was also used as a storage place for surveyors' and other maritime equipment used by the dock's engineers. Originally, the vessel had been a 'dumb barge' (i.e. without any motive power of its own), which had formerly been used in conveying the spoil dredged by the dock's bucket-dredger to be tipped on the edge of the river channel; later, when this spoil had consolidated, it was capped by quarry stone to form the Training Walls, whose purpose was to confine the flow of the river between these walls on each side of the channel, thereby preventing meanders and speeding the flow to prevent silting.

The Barge also acted as a convenient floating landing-stage, alongside which the Pilot Cutter was moored between tides. At tide-time the Trinity House pilots walked across the beach, to be ferried

across from the Scar to board their cutter in a rowing boat, preparatory to making their way down river and out to sea to Nelson Buoy, where they embarked on the incoming vessels, which they would then pilot up to Preston Dock.

The original Barge was superseded in 1952 by the 'Musgrave', a pensioned-off tug owned by the Dock Authority. This barge (it would be incorrect to refer to it by any other name, for by now her engines had been removed for scrap) was the subject of a dramatic rescue by Lytham Lifeboat in January 1954, when she sank at anchor in a storm which varied between Gale Force 8 and Storm Force 10. The barge-keeper, Teddy McKenna, just had time to dial 999 to call out the Lifeboat before leaving his sinking vessel for the safety of her rigging, from which he was picked off and put ashore to be taken to Lytham Hospital to recover from his ordeal.

In 1962 the 'Musgrave' was succeeded by the 'Druid', a Glasgow coaster which broached to and capsized in a Force 8 gale while crossing the Ribble Bar. She was declared a loss, was salvaged and bought by the Dock Authority and suitably converted as a replacement for the 'Musgrave'. Continuing in service until 1979 when, by then unmanned, she sprang a leak in August of that year, was taken out of service, sold in 1981 by the Dock Authority and converted back into a sea-going vessel!

So ended a lifetime's duty on the River at Lytham of a succession of vessels that acted to service the needs of the Port of Preston, all of them simply known as the Barge. A familiar sight off the end of Fairlawn Road and a source of interest and wonder to those ashore who knew little of her purpose and her origins.

S.B.

### "My Wharf at the Old Dock Pool at Lytham"

The discovery of the following copy of a letter from Henry Alty, dated 30th June 1896, coincides with the ending this year of a century of service by that firm to the Building Trade in Lytham. Much of Lytham's development during that century derives from Alty's, whose yard in Lytham, located in Freckleton Street, was closed down this year.

Their presence here was an important piece of Lytham's history, for it describes the location of their 'private wharf' at the Old Dock Pool, adjacent to the old shipyard.

And it is a piece of building history in the town, in that it gives the origins and prices of bricks from

both Accrington and Huncoat, and of their transportation costs to Lytham Railway Station (the terminus of the Preston and Wyre Railway [Lytham Branch] in Station Road, the site of the present Fire Station).

Furthermore, it is a piece of transport history, in that it describes the methods of delivery from Hesketh Bank to Lytham in those days - canal, river and railway. Just imagine it - your house could be the subject of the bricks quoted. Have you ever wondered where your bricks came from?

### From Henry Alty

--- Hesketh Bank ---

To The Burnley Brick & Lime Co

Dear Sir

Facing Brick for Lytham

From enquiries I have made I find the prices are about as under delivered at Lytham Station.

Accrington	Huncoat
Best 56/8 per 1000	Best 52/4 per 1000
Seconds 47/8 " "	Seconds 44/4 " "

The cost of carrying facing bricks from the river hear (sic) (after they are delivered on boat) and including unloading them at my wharf at Lytham will be about 7/- per 1000 without allowing for profit.

Yours truly

Henry Alty

S.B.

### Let's have "more" of Mrs Moore

The Lancashire Neet on Friday 15th November with Benita Moore and Bob Dobson was, in my opinion, one of the best I have ever attended, being a born and bred Blackburnian and my wife an Accringtonian; it brought back happy memories. I know some of the East Lancashire people whom she mentioned and also some she didn't, ones who appear in her books; working, as I did, in Blackburn Town centre for a number of years in the clothing trade and later in the insurance business, I came across many of them.

One of the visits she did talk about was going to Oswaldtwistle Mills; this is a truly wonderful outing, and it would be interesting if the Group could arrange a visit there. When our new headquarters opens next year, I think it would be a good idea for Benita Moore to attend.

I.B.

## Our Constitution - is it healthy and in good fettle (continued)?

Further to our previous article on this subject, further paragraphs of our Constitution read as follows:

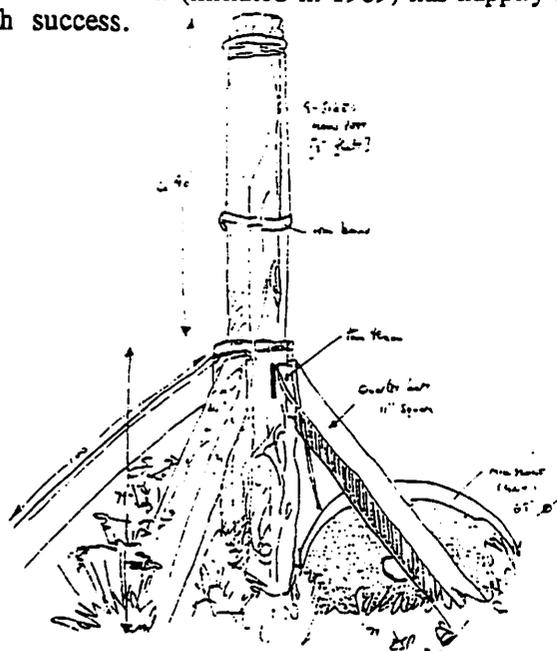
No 2. "... to cherish, nurture and protect the architectural features and visual amenities in the area of benefit".

No 3. "... to promote civic pride and high standards of planning and architecture in or affecting the area of benefit".

In 1988, when there was a proposal to demolish the Grain Drying Kiln in Victoria Street (the replacement by the Clifton Estate in the 1860s of the one appearing next to the windmill in the 1847 Barratt engraving of the Green and the Mill), steps were taken to try to get that building 'listed', particularly because, at the time, it was one of the only four remaining kilns still extant in the county.

Sadly, however, it was not considered to be of sufficient architectural merit to warrant being 'listed'. By kind permission of the then owner, the integral parts of the system were saved from the demolition men and they are safely stored for posterity.

Although not "within the area of benefit", the Group's application for listing the remains of Warton Post Mill (initiated in 1989) has happily met with success.



The 'listing' dated 26th June 1996 reads: "... Remains of Post Mill C17 or earlier. Circular timber post, the base sunk into the ground and stabilized by crossed members or 'cross trees', raking struts or quarter

trees were morticed into the body of the mill post and joined to the 'cross trees' to provide support for the mill post dated and stamped 1717 (this in turn would have supported a crown tree on which the body of the mill would have been constructed). The post is reduced in girth immediately above the junction of the post and the quarter-bars, perhaps to provide a seating for some part of the former superstructure.

The sunk post mill was the earliest type of post mill found in England, and these remains are thought to be the sole surviving examples of that type.

The Group's successful application was supported by the North West Mills Group (to which the Group is affiliated), as also by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (Wind and Watermills Section).

Warton Post Mill (in Mill Lane) had an interesting career, for it is believed to have been built in Lincolnshire, later to be removed to Rufford on the South side of the Ribble before finally (after dis-assembly) being moved across the river to Warton by water. The illustration of the post as it is today is published by courtesy of the Editor of the Newsletter of the North West Mills Group and the artist.

Members will appreciate that the two examples above are further proof that our objects continue to be satisfied.

P.P.

## The Parkinsons of Lytham. Biographical Portrait No 12 James Parkinson 1839-1921

James Parkinson was the fourth child and third son of John and Anne Parkinson of Lytham, featured in No 6 of this series. He was born on the 24th November 1839 and baptised on the 28th December 1839 at St Cuthbert's Church. He was the second child of John and Anne to be named James, the first having been born in 1838 and died in the same year.

James married Sarah Harper of Lytham on the 21st November 1859 at St Cuthbert's church. He was 19 years old at the time of his marriage, and was a fisherman. The marriage was witnessed by William Wignall and Richard Parkinson (James's uncle).

Sarah Harper was the daughter of John and Hannah Harper of Worsborough Dale, Yorkshire. She was born on the 28th June 1841 at Dove Cliff cottages in Worsborough Dale. The village is south east of Barnsley. She was 18 years old at the time of her marriage, and her father was a coal miner.

James and Sarah had seven sons and one daughter: John 1860, died 1861; John William 1862, married Margaret Jane Hardacre in 1883, died 1944; Nicholas 1864, died in the Mexico disaster 1886; Hannah Maria 1866, married Nicholas Parkinson in 1884, died 1945; Alfred 1868, married Margaret Waterworth in 1888 and Louise Caroline Parsons in 1914, died 1934; James 1871, married Jane Rimmer in 1895, died 1956; Edward 1872, married Rose Candlish in 1893, died 1948; and George 1874, married Ruth Rimmer in 1900, died 1966.

In 1841, James Parkinson lived with his parents and William Rimmer in Clifton St, Lytham. In 1851, he was a lodger with Betty Greenwood, a school mistress, in Clifton Street. Betty was the widow of Captain William Greenwood and formerly Elizabeth Parkinson. The remainder of James's family lived in Henry Street. James, the eldest surviving son, lived with Betty in order to receive a decent education.

In 1861, he lived with his wife Sarah and small son John, in back Clifton St and in 1871 he lived at No 39 Westby St with his wife and their four sons and one daughter. Anne Riley, later to marry John Parkinson (James's brother) was a servant who lived with the family.

In the period 1881-1891, the family lived at No 29 Westby St. Sarah Parkison died in April 1893 aged 51 and was interred at St Cuthbert's churchyard on the 14th April 1893.

For some years prior to his death in 1921, James had lived with his youngest son George (Codge) at No 29 Victoria St, Lytham. He died on the 4th December 1921 aged 82, and was interred at St Cuthbert's churchyard on the 8th December 1921. He died of natural decay.

James was a member of the crew of the Lytham lifeboat "Charles Biggs", which went to the rescue of the barque "The Mexico" in 1886. He was 47 years old at the time. His eldest son, John William, also took part in the rescue, but Nicholas, another son, who was a member of the St Anne's lifeboat "Laura Janet", perished in the incident.

D.M.

## Committee Blues

Oh give me your pity I'm on the committee  
Which means that from morning to night,  
We attend and amend, contend and defend,  
Without a conclusion in sight.

We confer and concur, we defer and demur,  
And reiterate all of our thoughts.  
We revise the agenda with frequent addenda,  
And consider a mass of reports.

We compose and propose, we suppose and oppose,  
Till our points of procedure are won.  
But though various notions are brought up as  
motions,  
There's terribly little gets done.

We resolve and absolve, but we NEVER dissolve,  
And it seems to just go on and on.  
What a shattering pity, to end our committee,  
Where else could we have so much fun! .....

A.B.B.

## Public recognition

An unexpected reference to the Group appears on a Picture Post Card of Lytham Windmill on sale locally.

Featured on the back of the card is a history of the mill, ending with the words "... the mill is now to be used by local Societies, including the Lytham Heritage Group".

A welcome piece of publicity with far-reaching effect.

S.B.

## The Christmas Tree

Although Christmas-time may only be for two days, there are weeks of preparation beforehand, leading up to the last days before the event, when all semblance of usual routines goes haywire.

Extra work involved needs extra staff to cope with it.

It was in a situation such as this, many years ago, that a local Christmas Tale unfolded.

There was a Fruit and Vegetable wholesaler in Freckleton, who had an order every year for a Christmas tree to be delivered to a local church.

Nothing unusual about that. The drivers had the 'drop' worked out to a fine art. Their wagon, with twenty and more feet of tree on board, would be driven alongside the church gate, would pull up quietly. They would take off the tail ropes and

swing the heavy end of the trunk down on to the pavement. Next they would loose off the front ropes and let the rest of the tree drop to the ground, then grab the ropes, jump into the cab... and away off home, quick!

But not so on one particular occasion. Oh no, nothing so simple.

This was when two elderly Freckleton brothers were asked to effect the delivery due to staff shortages, extra work wanted here, there and everywhere, etc etc.

Neither of the two 'volunteers' was in the best of condition for heavy lifting; one was retired, the other working out his time on light duties, but a simple job like dropping a tree off would hardly be called over-burdening...

The tree being loaded for them, off they drove in the wagon, part of the tree jutting out over the cab roof, the other end overhanging the wagon flat. A bit ungainly, but by no means unusual for so long a load.

They pulled up at the church... and made their almost fatal mistake... Seeing no one around, they plodded all the way along the path to the vicarage, to let it be known that the tree had arrived.

The vicar was delighted and welcomed them with open arms. "Good to see you, boys. Come with me and I'll show you where we want it. Very good of you to help us!"

He trotted after them as they went down to the wagon. He watched as they unloaded the tree on to the pavement. He gave a sympathetic nod as they lifted the tree to start their journey. He looked apprehensive as they swung the tree halfway across the road to line up with the entrance gate. He heaved a sigh for them as they pushed and shoved and forced it through the gate and up to the main door.

The two 'boys' were about to put their burden down and straighten their backs, when the vicar waved them forward again.

"Oh no, boys, not through there. This way, follow me". And he marched off and round to the West Door at the side.

They followed. The two 'boys' pulled and puffed and panted, staggering around gravestones, memorials, slid on slippery, mossy paths, until eventually they lined it up by the West Door.

"I'll go and open up, boys; just wait there a moment - don't go away".

With that, he shot off, leaving them hanging on to the tree for dear life, among the gravestones and partly against the door. There was no room to put the tree down, so they gritted their teeth and held on until the bolts rattled and the door swung open.

"Right, boys, that's it. In you go, straight down the aisle".

And they slithered and tugged and swayed and pulled and grunted at that blessed tree, all the way up to the altar.

"Alright, put it down there then". They let go as though they had been stung... and a dreadful thought dawned on them. Did he want them to put it upright? No, perhaps not, but it was a close thing even so...

Suddenly, there was the vicar again.

"Boys, boys, just a moment". And he beckoned them back to him... What did he want now, they wondered? But all was well, for the reverend gentleman had his hand in his pocket, digging deep as if for hidden treasure.

"Here you are, boys", he said. "You've done well for us, you deserve a little something for your efforts". He produced a shilling and, waving it about between them, said "I've only got this in change. Has either of you any change, so I can divide it between you?"

The two old lads, astonished, shook their heads. No, they'd no change.

"Oh dear, what are we to do?" asked the vicar.

The elder of the two spoke up and saved the day. Nodding across at his brother, he said: "Goo on. Thee 'ev it... I'll 'ev it next year!"

W.J.O.

## The Quarterly Quiz

No answers were received to the last issue's quiz -

"Where in Lytham in a public place is a flagged-roof building to be seen?"

Answer - the Cobbled Workshop building (in South Westby Street) between the 'old' Pleasant Street Car Park and the new one.

This quarter's quiz. Where in Lytham (apart from Henry Street) has a street two different names?

S.B.

## The last Governor of Inverary Jail

Our September meeting was addressed by Mrs Jayne Kelly, who recounted the history of Inverary Jail. Having happened on a University vacation job as a Guide at Inverary Castle, Mrs Kelly became involved in the transformation of that building when

it was decommissioned and turned into a tourist attraction.

Having fallen in love with the township, Mrs Kelly was fortunate to be able to stay on there after graduation and to become involved in the research leading to the lifelike exhibition for which this remarkable building is now famous, and in fact to be the first Governor in the Jail's new guise.

Her description of the rigours experienced by the prisoners and the severity of the system through the years, splendidly illustrated by slides, gave us a well-documented insight into the building's history.

S.B.

### **The restoration of a steam-powered textile mill**

On 9th October Mr Ian Gibson, the Curator of the Queen Street Mill in Burnley, related his experiences in the rescue and restoration of this Lancashire Cotton Mill. The Lancashire Museum Service has been able to take over the ongoing refurbishment of this working mill, uniquely the only remaining steam-driven cotton mill in the world that is still producing cloth.

Mr Gibson kept his audience entertained by his description of the difficulties which had to be overcome and the problems which beset them in restoring the mill as an industrial museum. Well illustrated by slides showing the progress of the task before them, Mr Gibson's talk left an audience wanting to sample the project. Could this be a venue for a summertime trip?

P.P.

### **Lancashire Neet - 15th November 1996**

Over 90 members and their friends revelled in the Lanky humour and reminiscences of Benita Moore and Bob Dobson this year. Booked to come again following a previous visit, Mrs Moore had her audience in stitches as she recalled examples of native wit (and malapropisms) which she had collected during many years with the travelling van of the Lancashire County Library in East Lancashire.

Ablly supported by Bob Dobson with his contributions from Accrington in both dialect and verse, the entertainment was topped off by a traditional Lancashire Hot Pot Supper and Apple Pie.

A splendid evening, which sent people home full of bonhomie. It reely were a right gradely do!

P.P.

### **The Christmas Party - Wednesday 11th December 1996**

The Party proved to be another evening of sociable entertainment and fun. Excellently entertained by a Group called 4MS from Mellor, who go on the road in support of a Multiple Sclerosis charity, their items included songs (male and female solos and duets), a conjuror and a most versatile piano-accordionist.

A happy conclusion to their evening sent them away with a contribution to their charity from the proceeds of the raffle of £80, topped up by the proceeds of the floral table decorations in the sum of a further £20.

A satisfying evening in every way.

R.E.

### **Future Meetings**

#### 1997

**8th Jan**

**Assembly Rooms 2.30 p.m.**

Mr Bob Trotter

The Ordnance Survey

**29th Jan**

**Assembly Rooms 10.30 a.m.**

Coffee Morning

**12th Feb**

**Assembly Rooms 2.30 p.m.**

Mr Maurice Jones

The Lytham St Anne's Nature Reserve

**12th March**

**Assembly Rooms 2.30 p.m.**

Stanley Brown

The Origins of Lytham Street Names

**26th March**

**Assembly Rooms 10.30 a.m.**

Coffee Morning

**9th April**

**Assembly Rooms 7.30 p.m.**

Mr Tony Bloomer

Stick Dressing and Shepherds' Crooks

**14th May**

**Assembly Rooms 7.30 p.m.**

Mr John Lamb

The Life of a Sunderland Point Shrimper, and the River Lune (video)

**11th June**

**Assembly Rooms 7.30 p.m.**

Annual General Meeting