



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**



OCCASIONAL BULLETIN No. 8

Winter 2011/12

Friends of Smithills Hall Executive Committee

Chairman: David Williams **Vice Chairman:** Robin Scott-Smith **Secretary:** Margaret Koppens
Treasurer: Wendy Edwards **Members:** Ann Marie Elliott-Clark, Eric Howarth, Joan Sheppard,
Clive Walsh, Frances Brierley

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Choir from Horwich, a Christmas Social with Lizzie Jones, and a Carol Service in the Chapel.

Introduction

Welcome to your latest Friends' Bulletin. By popular request I have now removed the photographs of the Committee as they were of such poor quality. No not the Committee! I must refute any suggestion that they do not wish to be identified, because they can justifiably claim that they couldn't be identified from the photographs anyway!

Events Review

Since the last bulletin we have had a busy time at the Hall with the full participation of volunteers from the Friends. There has been a children's ghost tour, an adult ghost tour, the Bennett

A **Halloween Children's Tour** was held at the Hall on Friday 28th October, when some 40 children and parents bravely set off to tour the Hall with their intrepid Friends' guides. This was the first time the Friends had been involved in a children's ghost tour at the Hall and it turned out to be remarkably popular. I understand that there was even a waiting list for places. Staff had decorated many of the rooms with spiders' webs, spiders, bats, coffins, skeletons and ghosts. Most of the children came dressed appropriately as witches, wizards and skeletons and were as frightening as the surroundings! As a special treat the Green Room (the George Marsh

Room) was open and suitably cold and mysterious. Guides for the night were Joan Sheppard, Peter Scofield, Eric Howard, Ann-Marie Elliott-Clarke and David Williams, assisted by new member Kath Jones.

The adult ghost tour held on 24th November provided a lot of enjoyment for those taking part. Thirty two adults attended. The event was particularly notable for the photographs taken by some of those on the tour, showing faces at windows, floating orbs and walls changing colour (the white Green Room wall came out light green on one photograph). My thanks to the Friends' guides Ann-Marie, Peter, and Dorothy.

Christmas Decorations

In late November the public rooms of Smithills Hall were again dressed in period Christmas decoration. A group of willing Friends' volunteers spent the day transforming the rooms and giving them a warm and more lived in feel.

Each year we are adding to our stock of decorations and are certainly enhancing the impact.

My warm thanks go to Ann-Marie, Dorothy, Frances, Kath, Margaret K, Marion, Stella, and Wendy.

The Bennett Choir sang, on Sunday 4th December, to a packed and appreciative audience in the Great Hall. The recently



formed choir of lady singers from Horwich sang a medley of Christmas carols. It was delightful to see the Hall full of people and to hear the sound of carols filling the Hall.

The Christmas Social

The Friends Christmas gathering was held on Wednesday 7th December in the Great Hall which was



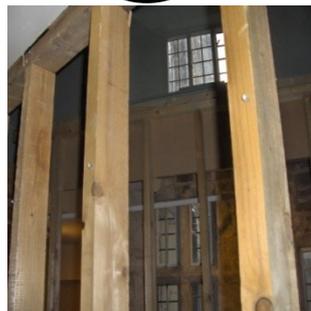
beautifully dressed in period decoration. We were excellently entertained by Lizzie Jones in what was probably her last performance at Smithills Hall. She

gave us a fine rendition of the tumultuous life of Mary, Queen of Scots from Mary's perspective. Lizzie's monologue sympathetically traced the life of Mary from childhood, to trials and tribulations of her captivity in England towards the end of her life.

The pie and peas supper afterwards was particularly welcome as the weather was cold and wet. My thanks go to all those volunteers who served refreshments, sold raffle tickets, and to Joan Sheppard and Ruth Ellison for their splendid arrangements.

The Kitchen Partitions

Contractors removed most of the partitions in the kitchen area over three days, from Monday



Monday the 12th December. Once removed there was general astonishment at the amount of space revealed, and the height of the room at the servant's corridor

end of the kitchen. As can be seen in the photograph, taken as the work progressed, there is high window which now lets in a lot of daylight. We will be working with the Council to help fund the reinstatement of a period kitchen in this area.

The Carol Service

The Revd. Vincent Whitworth and the Revd. Michael Taylor led our annual Carol Service in the Chapel. The carols and readings the Christmas were enjoyed by an appreciative congregation. Michael played the organ and gave some background to the carols, whilst Vincent conducted the service. Mulled wine and mince pies ended a splendid evening. Our thanks go to Michael and Vincent, Joan and Ruth for the arrangements and all those volunteers who helped serving the refreshments and clearing up afterwards.

Extract, by Andrew Briggs, from the Journal and Guardian, Friday 8th July 1927.

The owner of Smithills Hall, Nigel Victor Ainsworth, is reported as seeking the court's support to change the terms of the will of Richard Henry Ainsworth (the Colonel) to enable his affairs to be put in order prior to selling Smithills Hall. It reveals details of property values as they were in 1927.

"Smithills Hall Tenant's application to Court.

Mr Justice Clauson, [later to become a Knight, Lord Justice of Appeal, Privy Counsellor and Baron of Hawkshead] in the Chancery Division yesterday, heard an application by Mr Nigel Victor Ainsworth (Tenant for Life of Smithills Estate, Moss Bank Estate, Halliwell Estate, and the rents of



various properties in Halliwell and Bolton, and the Winwick Warren Estate

Northamptonshire) settled by the will of the late Mr Richard Henry Ainsworth (pictured). The respondents were the Trustee of the will and John Francis Ainsworth [President of the Friends until his death in 2005], tenant in the remainder of the estates, who is the son of the Tenant for Life.

Sir Herbert Cunliffe K.C, for the applicant, said he was applying for a declaration that the Trustees were at liberty, out of income received from the sale of any part of the settled estates, to pay and discharge the mortgages existing in other parts, and that upon the whole of the mortgages being so discharged, the applicant was entitled to be let into possession of the settled estates remaining unsold. Sir Herbert said the portion of the estates sold had to be realised more than sufficient to pay off the whole of the mortgages on the other portions, and the Trustees were willing to apply the incomes in discharge of the mortgages provided they were at liberty to do so. One of the provisions of the Testator's will, however, created a term of 21 years for the accumulation of rents and profits for the purpose of discharging the

mortgages, but Counsel submitted from the terms of the will that the Testator contemplated that the mortgages must be paid off from other sources than the accumulation of rents and profits. The Trustees were satisfied that it was a provident thing to pay them out of the proceeds of the sale. Smithills, Moss Bank and Halliwell had been valued roughly at £50,000. The Winwick Warren at £28,000 and the Testators personal estate, exclusive of furniture amounted to £255,000. Halliwell was mortgaged to the extent of £10,000 and Winwick to the extent of £15,700. There were no mortgages on Smithills or Moss Bank. The latter estate, in fact, was contracted to be sold to the Bolton



Corporation and that sale would be carried out. In reply to the judge, Sir Herbert said he was told the purchase price of Moss Bank was about £9,000. Counsel added that the net realty after providing for annuities and debts other than mortgages would be estimated revenue from the Testators of £2,000.

The personal estate consists of a number of shares in the Bleacher's Association, and the Trustees had sold a substantial amount of these shares for the purpose of paying: the death duties, Smithills Estate comprised a very old Hall which dated back to the Saxon times and anyone owning that estate would naturally want to occupy and keep it up of course. It was a burdensome house, the gardens alone costing £700 to keep up.

Mr Grant K.C, who appeared for the Tenant In Remainder, said the

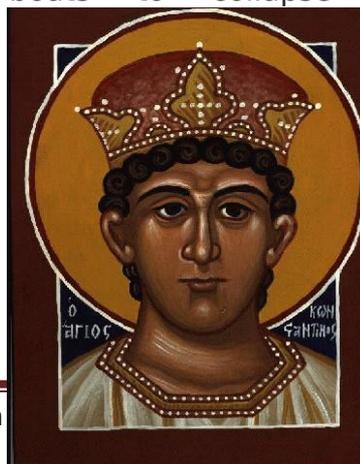
Testator lived in the house. He was connected with Bolton during the whole of his life, and it was a very old family connection: - Mr Justice Clauson "I am not entirely ignorant of that". Mr Grant said it was to his client's interest to live with his father in the ancestral home, but if the accumulation of income was to go on, they would have to live elsewhere. Sir Herbert Cunliffe said it would take a lot of capital expenditure to modernise the house. The present applicant was a nephew of the Testator, and he desired to occupy the house for a considerable portion of the year, and to take up the public duties in connection with the position which he might be expected to fill. Mr Grant said he thought it would be entirely for the benefit of his client that his Lordship should make the Declaration. Mr Atkins, for the Trustees, agreed to the proposed Declaration. His Lordship granted the Declaration as asked."



In Bulletin 7 I misquoted the entry in the "Smithills Hall" book as "In His Sign" when it should have read "In This Sign".

Marion Keeler has provided the following further information on this subject:-

Constantine the Great inherited his father's western forces and defeated the army of the emperor Maxentius just north of Rome at the Milvian Bridge. The River Tiber, swollen with autumn rains, caused the bridge of boats to collapse and swept Maxentius away to his death.



Constantine thus became undisputed master of the West in 312 AD. According to Eusebius, before the battle Constantine had had a vision of a flaming cross and heard a voice saying '**In hoc signo vinces**' ('You will conquer with this sign'). Constantine bore the cross on a banner and was victorious and so converted to Christianity, although historically it is uncertain whether he was ever baptised. Bernini carved him on a rearing horse in front of a flaming cross in Constantine (Scala Regia, Vatican, Rome). In 313 AD he granted tolerance to the Christian religion by the Edict of Milan. Constantine the Great inherited his father's western forces and defeated the army of the emperor Maxentius just north of Rome at the Milvian Bridge. The River Tiber, swollen with autumn rains, caused the bridge of boats to collapse and swept Maxentius away to his death. Constantine thus became undisputed master of the West in 312 AD. According to Eusebius, before the battle Constantine had had a vision of a flaming cross and heard a voice saying 'In hoc signo vinces' ('You will conquer with this sign'). Constantine bore the cross on a banner and was victorious and so converted to Christianity, although historically it is uncertain whether he was ever baptised. Bernini carved him on a rearing horse in front of a flaming cross in Constantine (Scala Regia, Vatican, Rome). In 313 AD he granted tolerance to the Christian religion by the Edict of Milan.

The 2012 Calendar: An apology

The printing of the calendars has proved to be a calamity. Even though we carefully checked the photographs and all the wording on the calendar, the dates have been found to be erroneous. The printer has amended and reprinted a new batch of calendars, and unsold calendars have been withdrawn. We will be seeking to be compensated for the errors and if anyone who has had a calendar and incurred expense with postage etc. wishes to contact us we will be more than happy to repay them, as well as letting them have a revised copy, or copies.

This has been deeply embarrassing for all concerned and we have learned some lessons from this, which we will use when we come to decide whether to have a calendar in 2013. We offer our sincere apologies for any inconvenience caused.

Staff changes

Janette Rix, the Historic Halls Manager has taken early retirement and will be replaced by Christine Collins who will phase into the work from April. Janette, who has been a pleasure to work with, will be greatly missed by us all. We wish her a happy and fulfilling retirement.

Annual General Meeting

The Friends of Smithills Hall AGM has been arranged for Saturday 9th June 2012 starting at 7pm.

Further details will be sent to members nearer the date.