



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



## FRIENDS BULLETIN No. 12

Spring 2013

### Friends of Smithills Hall Executive Committee

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

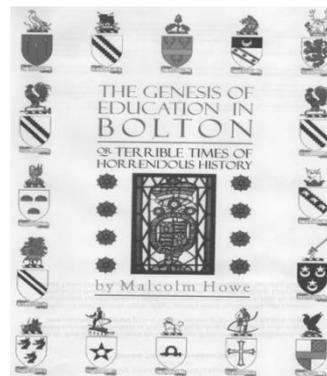
**Editor:** David Williams ([dewilliamz@hotmail.com](mailto:dewilliamz@hotmail.com))

### Introduction

Welcome to your latest Friends Bulletin. Although this Bulletin is headed 'Spring 2013', at the time of preparing this edition conditions are far from Spring like. The cold weather has continued for some weeks and real spring feels some time away. However, there are green shoots appearing so at least nature knows that this cold spell won't last indefinitely!

### Book Launch

Included with this Bulletin is a personal invitation from the Friends for you and companion(s) to attend the launch of the book "The Genesis of Education in Bolton" written by Malcolm Howe, who many of you will know is a life member of



the Friends, and who has generously decided that the proceeds of book sales during the evening will be donated to the funds of the

Friends - enabling us to continue to fund and support Hall developments and activities.

I hope that you will be able to attend and show your support for this worthwhile event. Please let Margaret Koppens know if you would like to come. Her address is on the invitation.

## *Ghost Tours*

Although we have now concluded our series of conducted Ghost Tours for this winter, we are already planning tours for next winter. We plan to have two children's evenings (Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> October & Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November) and four adult tours (Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October & Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2013, and Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February and 6<sup>th</sup> March 2014). If you would like to come to any of these enjoyable events, and I would thoroughly recommend them, I suggest early booking to avoid disappointment! These events attract large numbers of people to the Hall, providing much needed revenue for the Council from fees and shop sales (and publicity to encourage others to come along).

At our Committee meeting in March we were told that over £1,000 had been raised. Our thanks go to all those who freely gave their time to guide and steward these events.

## *Annual General Meeting*

This year's AGM will be held at Smithills Hall on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June commencing at 7pm. We are pleased to welcome back a previous speaker, Elaine Taylor who, after the formalities, will talk about 'A Tudor Pageant'. Elaine has recently been an active campaigner against the development of housing around the Coaching House at Smithills and shares our views on its inappropriateness. She is a committee member of the Lancashire Gardens Trust and a lecturer in garden history.

There will be a buffet, and drinks will be available.

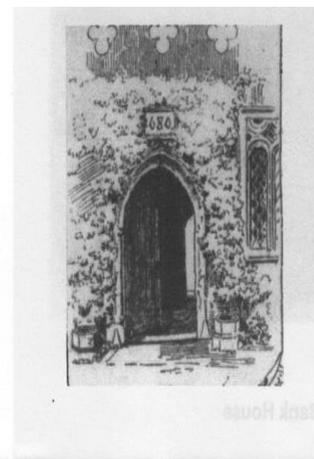
Details will be posted to all members. We will be delighted if you are able to come. Also intending to join us is our President Sir William, and Lady Stephanie Goring.

## *Is this how Smithills got its name?*

Taken from Brown's History of Great and Little Bolton 1825, and provided via Margaret Koppens.

The voice of tradition has loudly proclaimed that Smithells (sic) in the

townships of Halliwell and the parish of Bolton, was once the site of a royal Saxon palace; the forged date 680 placed over the doorway [see



picture] of the northern wing of the quadrangle seems to countenance the illusion. It is probable enough there was a moated dwelling on the spot as early, or even earlier than the date in question, but certainly not a stone residence, nor would its date be inscribed in Arabic numerals. Smithells as the allotted land and official residence of the Smith of a Saxon palace in the vicinity would almost justify the tradition of its ancient dignity. We do not say it was so, but deem it within the pale of probabilities. The following were the functions of a Blacksmith-royal about the eighth or ninth century:-

### **SMITH OF THE PALACE**

The ninth (of the inferior servants) is the Smith of the Palace. He must have his land free, his allowance of food and a dish of meat when the King is there. He must do what is necessary for the Court gratis, except three things, these are a stirrup, the rim of a kettle and a broken ploughshare; or a hinge, an axe for cutting wood, and the head of a spear. For each of these things he must be paid. He must do the jobs wanted by the officers of the Court gratis, but they ought to make him a present in every instance, for his labour. He claims the commutation fee of the

daughters of all the other blacksmiths. He claims a right to the rarities, which are the first liquors brought into the court. His seat in the palace is on the end of the bench near the domestic chaplain. His protection is from the time he begins his work in the morning until he finishes in the night. The fine for insulting him is six cows and one hundred and twenty silver pennies. His value is one hundred and twenty-six cows.

### *The Memorial At Smithills Hall - 'Those Who Fell' (cont.)*



It seems appropriate that, as we approach the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the commencement of the 1914-18 war, we remember the sacrifice of those commemorated on the Smithills Chapel Memorial. In the last two Bulletins I have given some of the history of two of these men, who were Ainsworth relatives, and who are commemorated on the left hand panel of the Memorial. In this bulletin and future bulletins I will give some information about the other fallen that research shows were predominantly employees of the Ainsworths.

I would welcome any additional information anyone has on the men commemorated as I would like to ensure that the records are as accurate as possible. These documents will then be placed in the Friends' archives for future reference.

Please contact David Williams at the Hall or by email at [dewilliamz@hotmail.com](mailto:dewilliamz@hotmail.com)

The first name of the fallen on the central panel is that of Albert Thornley.

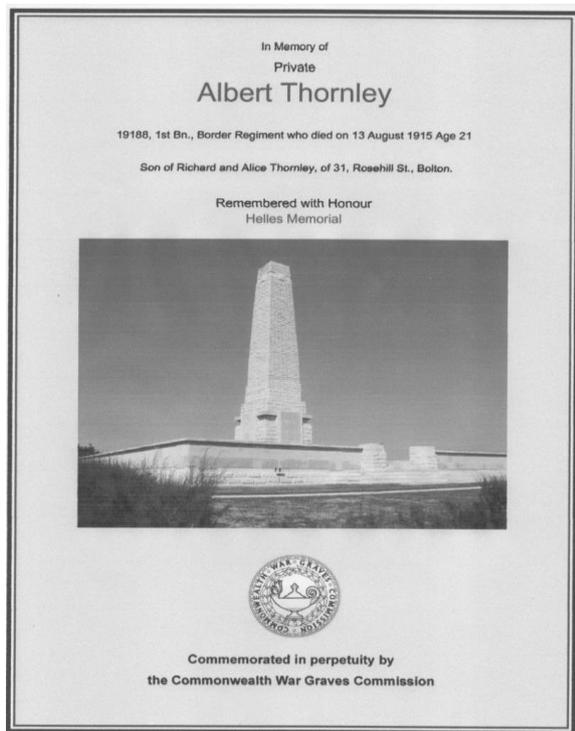
### **Albert Thornley (c1894 – 13 August 1915)**

The only census record showing Albert is for 1911 when he was 16 years of age. He was living with his uncle and aunt, Henry and Amelia Holt in Gibraltar Street in Gilnow, Bolton, together with his brother James and sister Lily. Albert's employment was described as a Crofter in a Bleach Works. Henry Holt was shown as a Towel Crofter also in a bleach works. Previous censuses in 1881 and 1891 show his parents, Richard (a gardener) and Alice Thornley living in Halliwell.

Albert's enrolment records in 1915 show him living at 4 Pool Terrace, Smithills, (pictured below as it is today) close to St Peter's church and across the way from Moss Bank Park. He described himself as a "Crofter" and was single. The main bleaching room in the bleaching factory was, and still is, called a croft.



Volunteering, he is given a Number: 19188 and assigned to the Border Regiment. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion sailed from Avonmouth on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1915 for Gallipoli (via Malta, Alexandria, and Mudros, a small Greek port on the Mediterranean island of Lemnos). The Battalion (part of the 87<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division) landed from HMS Implacable and HMS Euryalus at Cape Helles on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1915. His Regiment was involved in the Battle of Krithia Vineyard against troops of the



Ottoman Empire, which was fought between 6<sup>th</sup> August and 13 August 1915. It is reported that there were 4,120 casualties of this battle.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission records show that he was in the First Battalion Border Regiment when he died on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1915 aged 21. He is remembered with Honour on the Helles Memorial in Turkey, which is predominantly for those who died in or around Gallipoli and have no known resting place. Other records show that he may have died at sea, presumably in the Gallipoli area.

### *British Association of Friends of Museums (BAFM)*

*- Annual Meeting* - David Williams

Despite the arctic conditions on 23<sup>rd</sup> March I was pleased to be able to attend the BAFM North West Region Annual Meeting which was this year hosted by the Friends of Catalyst science and discovery centre, in Widnes, Cheshire. The centre's objective is to make science exciting and accessible to people of all ages and abilities. It has wonderful panoramic views across Cheshire from a rooftop Observatory, which you can reach

via a scenic glass lift, and interactive exhibits and galleries covering science and 'birth of industries' exhibits.

Despite the appalling weather conditions representatives of Friends' groups attended from across the North West – one to my knowledge travelling by public transport from Lancaster.

We were welcomed by the Chairman of the Friends, Chris Lewis, the Deputy Mayor of Halton Councillor Margaret Radcliffe, the Chairman of the Catalyst Trustees Mr Brian Davies and Bernard Rostron the BAFM Co-ordinator in the North West (who attended the FOSH AGM last June). One of the speakers was a former Curator of Catalyst, Sharon Brown who is now a Curator at the new Museum of Liverpool. She described the process of taking a site from waste ground to the finished article. She illustrated the vast range of exhibits at the Museum including many that I found particularly nostalgic as a youthful resident of Liverpool. I was enthralled by the Overhead Railway exhibition photographs and vividly remember my time riding on this long gone, but not forgotten, railway line.

In the afternoon we were addressed by Derek Twigg MP, who talked about the difficulty of maintaining the funding of Museums at a time of cuts and economies. Bob Roach gave a potted history of Widnes and Phil Day proved that if you know about chemistry you could pass yourself off as a magician. For example how yellow and blue liquids mixed together make purple! He demonstrates to children how exciting a career in science could be.

The value of these events is the opportunity to exchange experiences of volunteering with other like-minded Friends.

### *Other News*

In future Bulletins I hope to report on the development of the Parterre (now our responsibility), the Victorian kitchen, the kitchen window replacement and the footprint.



