

Friends of Smithills Hall

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FRIENDS BULLETIN No. 25

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Friends of Smithills Hall Executive Committee

**Chairman: David Williams Vice Chairman: Joan Sheppard Secretary: Margaret Koppens Treasurer: Wendy Edwards
Members: Robin Scott-Smith , Ann Marie Elliott-Clark, , Ruth Ellison, Dorothy Lee, Barrie Wallwork-Waddington.**

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Welcome

It seems that developments at the Hall have accelerated over the past year or so with a Timeline, Tea Room and now the planning of the refurbishment of the Ainsworth and Devey Rooms and Entrance Hall. In this edition of the Bulletin I describe, from Council documents, what changes are planned and the timescale. I will use the website to keep you up to date between Bulletins.

DW

This edition includes:-

- The annual Deep Clean

- The Devey Room developments
- Isabella Margaret Ainsworth (Part 1)
- Events (incl. AGM)
- Dates for your diary
- Barbara Williams

Annual Deep Clean

The Hall's annual deep clean took place week commencing Monday 4th April, starting in the Great Hall. The photograph, taken by the Council's Conservator Pierrette Squires, shows volunteers at work on the first morning Pierrette has sent her thanks to all the Friends who helped with this essential work.



Hall Refurbishment

Exploratory work has been completed to determine what needs to be done to return the Victorian Entrance Hall, Devey Room and Ainsworth Room to their former glory. As a grade 1 listed building planning permission is needed before the work can commence. The hope is that this can be achieved by August so that work can be completed by the end of this year. There follows a summary taken from a document displayed in the Entrance Hall.

“Devey Room

The plan for this room is to remove the wall coverings to explore the original panelling. The work includes exposing the fireplace and the removal of the kitchen currently located in the window alcove. The work would also include restoring the floor and treating the ceiling. With redecoration the entire space would be back to its original form. The corridor linking the entrance to the Devey Room will also require restoration and a small kitchen facility and toilet installed in the room located off the corridor.

This would create a self-contained flexible space. Plans are to use the Devey Room as a key part of the development of a viable wedding offer from the Hall with a view to using this income to help fund further restoration work in the future. This space could act as a potential venue for the wedding ceremony, the wedding breakfast or a pre-ceremony drinks space.

Entrance Hall

The plan for the entrance area of the Hall is to restore this space to its former glory. The design and finish of this space needs to be in keeping with the history of the building.

The creation of a new reception desk and shop area in the entrance hall will vastly improve the welcome for visitors and the flow through the building. This would also allow the current shop area to become solely a refreshment area. Costs for this would include repairs to the ceiling, a new clock and shop furniture and improvements to the heating so that the front doors could be kept open.

Ainsworth Room

In order to free up this space for registrar accommodation some refurbishment would be required, specifically around decoration and data points. This would necessitate further office/staff room facilities being established in one of the vacant rooms on the first floor.”

Developments will be shown on the website.

The Life and Times of Isabella Margaret Vaughan (Part 1)



In a small way I would like to chart the life of Isabella Margaret Vaughan, who married Richard Henry Ainsworth, and who owned Smithills Hall. The first part of this narrative recounts her early life based on census returns and some other records. DW

The Reverend John James Vaughan MA was of the ancient St. Andrew family of Leicester and descended from Marcydd ap Cynam, a Welsh chieftain who was the ancestor of the Royal

House of Tudor in the male line. He was Rector of St Lawrence's Parish Church Gotham in Nottinghamshire, Vicar of Radcliffe upon Soar and Rural Dean. The church is in the centre of Gotham and was built in 1180 and continues to the present (see the photograph below with its 13c steeple)



St Lawrence, Gotham

Gotham is a small village situated midway on the original road between the major towns of Nottingham and Loughborough. The river Trent passes 2 miles to the north, the river Soar 4 miles to the west, whilst the Fairham Brook meanders lazily by, about 1 mile to the east. The village sits inside a semicircular amphitheatre of mainly wood-covered hills which rise to a height around 100 metres above sea level. It was noted for its production of gypsum.

In 1840 James (1806 – 7th November 1881) lived in Gotham with his wife Lucy Vaughan (daughter of Paynton Pigott Stainsby Conant), born 8th July 1809, whom he had married in 14th October 1830. They had a son Henry born on December 1834, daughter Lucy born in 1837 and another son Paynton born in September 1838. **Isabella Margaret** was born in 1840.

The 1841 Census does not include Henry, who would have been 7 years of age. Isabella Margaret is 1 year old. (Census enumerators were instructed to record children less than 15 years of age accurately although adults should be rounded to the nearest 5 years – many chose to ignore this and recorded all

ages accurately). Mother Lucy is not on the 6th June Census as she died on 12th June 1840. Isabella was therefore born before that date. Did Isabella's mother die as a result of her birth?



Old Rectory, Gotham

The Rector was evidently reasonably well off as he had three domestic servants in 1841. It is clear that from her birth Isabella was used to having servants in attendance. The Rectory shown above (minus car) was built in 1843 and was described as 'commodious'. At that time the Vaughan family lived with a governess, a cook, a lady's maid, a schoolroom maid, a house maid, a kitchen maid, a coachman and a footman.

Her father married again, to Mary Crewe, on 15 February 1847. Mary was born 24th August 1795, in London, making her 52 years of age. This was her third marriage having previously been married to James Eversfield (more on the Eversfield's later) and Henry Tredcroft. Both died. She had five children from these marriages. She died on 3rd June 1872.

The 1851 Census, taken on Sunday 30th March, records the family still in Gotham with a son Paynton Le Marchant Vaughan aged 12 (he died on 16th November 1853 at school in Marlborough), daughter Lucy aged 15 and Isabella Margaret is shown as Margaret and recorded on the Census as 'School at home'. They now have 9 domestic staff including a Governess. Clearly Isabella is used to the comfort of having domestic servants around from an early age and which sets the pattern for her subsequent years.

Part 2 in the next Bulletin will chart, through the census returns and other accounts, Isabella's life beyond 1870 and something of what she was like as a person.

Hall Events

The second of the Time Traveller events for school children was completed on Tuesday 24 May with a presentation to parents etc. of activities in the form of a video and photographs. The children then had a 'Tudor' feast and gave their relatives a tour of the Hall to illustrate what they had learnt. Ann Marie and I had given them two tours during the project (one inside and on another day an external tour).

Both these projects increased the children's awareness of their local heritage and an awareness of its many facets.

Annual General Meeting 2016

The Friends of Smithills Hall's 27th AGM was held on Wednesday 8th June in the Dome Room at Smithills Hall. 27 members attended. The prequel to the meeting was the opportunity for members to socialise whilst having their sandwiches, cakes and tea or coffee. Sadly our speaker, Mark Gordon of the Woodland Trust, did not attend to the disappointment of members due to a diary glitch.

The AGM opened and the Chairman then used the opportunity to report to members on the past year and also to discuss developments in the Devey Room etc. (reported elsewhere in this Bulletin). He thanked everyone who had contributed their time over that time.

The Secretary Margaret Koppens reported on membership and other related issues. Wendy Edwards reported on the year's accounts – a copy of which will be included with this Bulletin when distributed. The new Committee were duly elected with the one change. Robin Scott Smith, after many years of service, was replaced as Vice Chairman by Joan Sheppard whilst Robin continues to serve as a Committee member.

Volunteer's Afternoon Tea.

Bolton Library & Museum Services organised and invited their volunteers to afternoon tea

to thank them for their support and hard work. They arranged the afternoon tea at Smithills Hall on Saturday 11th June prepared by the Smithills Tea Room. After the tea volunteers were invited to have a guided tour led by Friends of Smithills' guides.

Smithills Garden Party

The annual Smithills Hall Garden Party will be held on Sunday 24th July from 12 – 4pm. The Friends have made a donation to the running cost of the event as we believe it is an interesting and enjoyable way to keep the Hall in the forefront of the community consciousness. There will be animals from the Smithills Open Farm, live music, Little Voices' Workshops based on Roald Dahl's BFG and there will be songs performed from West End and Broadway shows. Bolton FM radio will be live at the Party and there will be food and craft stalls.

This exciting event is well worth a visit. There will be special arrangements for parking at Smithills Hall School.

For details of **Ghost & History tours, Craft Fairs** and **Roald Dahl** events see the Friends website.

The Garden Tool Shed

The shed has been delivered and installed in the Hall Courtyard after finally receiving planning permission.

George Marsh footprint

Planning permission received and now waiting for refurbishment work to begin. The footprint is not being moved!

Barbara Williams

4th November 1931 – 22nd March 2016

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of a long term member of the Friends. Barbara, aged 84, became a member in 2000. She will be sadly missed by all her extended family and friends. Her funeral service was at St Thomas' Church, Halliwell on Tuesday 5th April. The Friends were represented.