

NEWSLETTER



Local Heritage *initiative*

Heritage Grant success for Lathom's exciting programme of exploration

The phenomenal interest and progress made by the Lathom Park Trust since its launch a year ago was crowned in September with the award of a Local Heritage Initiative Grant worth over £25,000. The money comes from a partnership between The Heritage Lottery Fund, the Nationwide Building Society and the Countryside Agency and now enables us to immediately start our Historic Lathom Project. "We are on the cusp of a voyage of discovery and ready to achieve something of great significance" said Jamie Quartermaine, of Oxford Archaeology North and Ron Cowell, Curator of Prehistoric Archaeology at Liverpool Museum enthusiastically describes Lathom as "The Archaeological Honey-pot". However, it was the evidence of the enormous support from the local people of Lathom and LPT members which finally convinced the Awards Panel that the Historic Lathom Project was truly worthy of their investment. *Full details on next page*

MUTUAL SUPPORT

It was the intention of the Lathom Park Trust to hold an open day to enable the latest excavations to be viewed, but unfortunately Foot & Mouth Restrictions prevented unrestricted access.

Despite these desperate circumstances local farmers and landowners have been extremely co-operative with our archaeologists.

The Lathom Park Trust would like to place on record our sincere thanks and appreciation for their invaluable assistance during such crucial times.

Michael Wood and BBC film Lathom's Shakespearian discoveries



Michael Wood



Filming with Lathom Park Trust's archaeologists Mark Fletcher and Steve Baldwin



by John Hinchliffe
World Heritage Officer LCC

In the middle of July I received a telephone call from a person in a film company called Mayavision who said he was making a four-part film for BBC TV about the life of Shakespeare, and that he wanted to gain access to the Derby vaults in Ormskirk Parish Church. He was following up the links between Shakespeare and the Earls of Derby, in particular Ferdinando, the 5th Earl, who is buried in the vaults. I said that he would need the permission of the Earls of Derby, but as far as I know, the vaults were sealed and entry was last made in the 1880's. - and no one now knows how to get access.

The caller's second enquiry was about Lathom Park Chapel, and whether its interior was still of authentic circa 1500 appearance and would provide a period setting for Shakespeare's era. I explained that although the Chapel has a delightful interior, only a

few features such as the bell-cote and screen survive. Anxious to to gain publicity for Lathom, I supplied him with some relevant information and said that if he was visiting within the next few days he would be lucky enough to see the archaeological excavation at the West Wing of Lathom House, which was being undertaken by Matrix Archaeology and Oxford University Archaeological Unit (North), where some of the buried surviving parts of the house in which Ferdinando actually lived, had just been uncovered. He was intrigued and agreed to visit. It transpired that the gentleman was no less than Michael Wood, the acceptable face of history and archaeology, recently seen in 'Conquistadors' on BBC2.

I met him at Ormskirk Parish Church on 23rd July and we spent half an hour scouring the subterranean boiler room for an entrance to the vaults. We then drove to Lathom House where he met Mark Fletcher, and arranged to visit again a couple of days later to film the excavation and carry out interviews.

By this time Michael Wood's interest in the hidden mysteries of Shakespeare's Lathom had been truly aroused, extending his visit a further day for a guided parish tour by LPT member Amanda Mercer, taking in more location work and filming the stage and environs at Lord Lathom's Theatre in Hall Lane. SO WATCH OUT FOR LATHOM ON BBC TV NEXT YEAR IN 'THE STORY OF SHAKESPEARE'

HISTORIC
LATHOM

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS DUE
See enclosed Form for details

THE HISTORIC LATHOM PROJECT

by Project Managers: Stephen Baldwin & Jamie Quartermaine

Grant Award success get Lathom projects up and running



LHI is a partnership between the Heritage Lottery Fund, Nationwide Building Society and the Countryside Agency

In April this year, the Lathom Park Trust submitted a grant application to the Local Heritage Initiative (LHI) Scheme to fund the first stage of a long-term historic landscape and village survey, 'The Historic Lathom Project'.

The Local Heritage Initiative is a national grant scheme that helps local groups to investigate, explain and care for their local landscape, landmarks, traditions and culture. LHI is a partnership between the Heritage Lottery Fund, Nationwide Building Society and the Countryside Agency

The Historic Lathom Project was conceived by the Trust in January 2001 and put to the 'Friends' meeting in February for approval and support.

This is an exciting project designed to involve the local community in investigating the rich history of Lathom.

The research will be done by means of a vernacular buildings survey, a programme of work at the Duttons Farm site incorporating a geophysical survey, fieldwalking and archaeological excavation, a documentary study of the putative medieval parks and then the presentation of the results to a wider audience through presentations, a dedicated web site, non-technical booklet, interpretation boards, open days, guided walks and talks.

VERNACULAR BUILDINGS SURVEY

The principle objectives of the vernacular buildings survey are to identify and determine the survival quality, extent and importance of the buildings located within the village. This will involve the external, and where possible internal, examination of all buildings within the extent of Lathom, to establish evidence of early fabric. The results will be incorporated into a database, along with digital photographs and from this it will be possible to establish the existence, distribution and character of the oldest structures within the area.

DUTTONS FARM

The Duttons farm element will investigate a scatter of medieval pottery in the area to the north of the park, and will seek to determine if there was a medieval settlement here and if so what relationship did it have to the park and why and when it was abandoned. Initially this will involve field walking to define the extent of the pottery scatter, and will be followed by a geophysical survey to examine sub-surface features.

LANDSCAPE HISTORY

The landscape history element of the project will identify features and monuments in the present-day landscape and report on their condition and potential for enhancement and protection. It will investigate evidence for the extent and character of the much larger, early circuit of the earls of Derby's medieval hunting park.

PRESENTATION

The key element of the programme is to ensure that the new information coming from this study, in addition to other recent research, is widely disseminated and to this end it is proposed to establish a web site for Lathom park, which will be updated as results become available.

In addition a pamphlet will be produced summarising the results of the project and finally an information board will be erected at an appropriate location in Lathom.

In confirming that the grant application was successful, LHI had to exclude the excavation element of the Duttons Farm project, on the grounds that the undertaking of any excavation would set an unacceptable precedent for this grant awarding body. The Trust, however, feels that this is crucial to the whole programme, with Mid-Stoneage, Iron-Age, Roman and Medieval elements already in evidence. It is therefore determining alternative sources of funding to ensure this important excavation project continues well into the future.



One of the volunteer groups at the Lathom Park Trust's Vernacular Survey training day run by the Oxford University Archaeological Unit (North) earlier this month

VERNACULAR SURVEY GROUP

Co-ordinator: John Hinchliffe 0151 709 4254
Peter Smith, Tony & Rebecca Richardson, Bob Baxter, E Craig Ross & Fiona Duggan, AJ Ainscough, Mike Carrington, Paul Smith, Doug Elliot, VVG Taylor, P Boylett, Del Ellis, John Trippier, Rev. Dr. Sewell, Lilian Stewart, Ian Stewart, Lynne Lomas, A Sayer, Margaret Edington, Geoff Radcliffe, Vi Hodge, Eric Joinson

ARCHIVE RESEARCH GROUP

Co-ordinator: David Dunn 01695 422 550
Charles & Jennie Coombes, Neil Griffiths, Mark Hill, Doug Elliot, Beryl & Brian Whittington, Peter Ferguson, Janet Johnston, David & Danielle Soper, Geoff Murray, Angela Moran, Fay Alexander, Mike Carrington, Yvonne Sephton, Ian Gornell, Lynne Lomas, Rev. Dr. Sewell, Eileen Rooney, S Baldwin

THEATRE INFLUENCES GROUP

Co-ordinator: Peter Ferguson 01704 893 083
John Knowles, Pam Nanson, Kathleen Wilde, Sue Beesley, Madeleine Were, Amanda Mercer, Ken Vincent, Joy Murray, Neil Griffiths

EDUCATION MODULES GROUP

Co-ordinator: Colin Pilkington 01704 892 786
Brenda Gold, Shirley Landrum, Margaret Gardener, Gillian Goddard, Adrian Taylor, Lynne Gray, Jo Hooker

WALLED GARDEN GROUP

Co-ordinator: Mark Fletcher 0161 286 9663
Ged Beesley, Jenny Rushton, Mr & Mrs Andrew Beeston, Mark Hill, Madeleine Were, John Hayton, Pam Nanson, Mona Duggan

SOCIAL EVENTS GROUP

Co-ordinator: Ailsa Bennet 01704 892 897
Beryl Whittington, Jenny Coombes, Janet Pope, Jenny Rushton, Mary Rees, Isobel Carrington, Mary Fairclough, Joy Murray, Sue Beesley, Pam Nanson, Anne Ferguson, Carol Ainscough, Gerard Fairclough, Amanda Mercer, Ged Beesley

AGRICULTURE SURVEY GROUP

Co-ordinator: Ken Vincent 01695 424 426
Philip Beesley, Mary Gorst, David Dunn

WEBSITE DESIGN GROUP

Co-ordinator: Jamie Quartermaine 01524 848 666
Stephen Baldwin, John Knowles, David Dunn, Peter Ferguson

WE'D LIKE YOU WITH US - HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Friends of the Trust and members of the local community can express interest and actively participate in the project by contacting the Lathom Park Trust Secretary or WLDC Conservation Office. The scope and depth of involvement is down to each individual, it can take the form of documentary research, fieldwork, physical excavation or more specifically related aspects of Lathom's heritage. From the volunteer groupings above it can be seen that many people have already shown a keen interest to participate in this exciting venture. If you would like to join them please don't hesitate to contact us immediately. The Trust welcomes new members and their diverse skills to help the two year project meet its stated aims. Copies of the project design can be obtained from the LPT Secretary.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE AND GUIDANCE

Lathom Park Trust has assembled a host of acclaimed archaeological and historical experts to bring training and guidance to the volunteer groups. Oxford Archaeology North, Liverpool Museum's Prehistoric Archaeology Department and Landscape Historians Dr Alan Crosby and Nigel Neil, will all be involved throughout the two year project. Volunteer co-ordination, transport and equipment will be provided by The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV). BTCV is the UK's largest practical conservation charity and supports the activities of people working to improve their local environment. The volunteer's day-to-day project activities will be managed by BTCV and monitored by the professional bodies mentioned above.

Contacts:
Lathom Park Trust Secretary, Ailsa Bennett 01704-892897
Project Managers:
Stephen Baldwin 01704-893716
Jamie Quartermaine 601524-848666

MR RICHARD BEESLEY

29.10.1912 - 1.4.2001



The Lathom Park Trust was saddened to hear of the death of Mr Richard (Dick) Beesley who kindly permitted archaeologists from Liverpool Museum to investigate an Iron Age / Romano-British Settlement found on his farm at Moss Bridge, Lathom in 1998. He had worked on the farm since 1932 and was amazed to learn that folk could possibly have lived and farmed there for over 5,000 years.

Mr Beesley told me of the time he and his family first arrived in Lathom. "We had just come to live at the Ring O' Bells Public House in March 1924, I was 11 years old and vividly remember the explosions when Lathom Hall was demolished. Soon after I went with my brother and Uncle to the remains of the Hall and I can still picture two rows of young chestnut trees growing on the sloping ground to the north where a new drive was planned but never finished. I think those responsible for blowing Lathom Hall up must have held a grudge against Lathom for some reason."

Ron Cowell, Curator of Prehistoric Archaeology at Liverpool Museum and leader of the team excavating at the farm was extremely sad to hear of Mr Beesley's death. He said, "Whenever I met him he was such fascinating company and I will always be grateful for his interest and support in the work we were doing at Duttons Farm. It is a shame that he won't see the continuing results of our work but his enthusiastic support will remain a lasting tribute."

Stephen Baldwin

LATHOM CONSERVATION AREA EXTENDED

The last newsletter included a report on WLDC proposed Appraisal of the Lathom Park Conservation Area. The initial Appraisal and Proposals were approved for public consultation purposes in April 2001. All property owners, residents and stakeholders in the Conservation Area were consulted in June.

A public meeting was held in the Council Offices on 9th July 2001 when the Appraisals and Proposals for Lathom were discussed. Views expressed at the meeting, and all written representations will be formally referred back to the Council who will then decide what action to take. The Appraisal concluded that Lathom Park contains architectural, historic, landscape and archaeological interest, but that these exist in an area much wider than the current Conservation Area, the most important aspects being seen as;

- The historic importance of "Lathom House" as the seat of the de Lathoms, the home of Thomas Stanley and Margaret Beaufort and the "Northern Court", the inspiration for Richmond Palace and the site of the sieges of 1644 and 1645.

- The importance of Lathom Park as an early Georgian Parkland, with many original components still existing or at least identifiable.

- The architectural importance of the West Wing of Lathom House as a rare example of the work of Giacomo Leoni.

- The architectural and historic importance of several other buildings, with a predominant use of natural local materials, particularly Lathom Park Chapel and the Almshouses.

- The historic importance of Lathom Park as a 1st World War Remount Depot.

- The historic importance of the Third Earl and his theatrical connections.

The Proposals, arising from the Appraisal, recommended that the boundary of the Conservation Area be extended to include the whole of the 18th Century Parkland, to take in the Newburgh Lodges, Moss Hey Gate, Moss Hey Bridge, the nearby Ice-house, Goose Island Pond, Postillion Cap and major areas of woodland. The Spa Roughs area to include the Scheduled Ancient Monument and a substantial part of the surrounding woodland which is a Biological Heritage Site.



Briars Brook culvert, built in 1771, one of the earliest trunk canals in Britain

Park View Cottage, The Poplars on Hall Lane and the group of buildings clustered around Cranes Hall are also included in the extended Conservation Area. Lathom Parish Council welcomed the proposals in principle whilst emphasising the need to be mindful of residents and landowners views.

They also suggested other areas in Lathom for possible consideration including the Listed canal culvert, at Briars Brook (pictured above).

The document proposed an Article 4(2) Direction on all of the residential properties which mean that planning permission would be required for any alterations to front elevations of buildings. Some guidance on development in the Conservation Area was given and some suggestions were made for environmental improvements in the Conservation Area.

Full copies of the Proposals are available from West Lancashire District Council's Planning and Development Services. Telephone 01695 585102

LATHOM WINS LANCASHIRE'S BEST KEPT VILLAGE PRIZE
Lathom awarded Runner-Up prize in Large Village Class - a first time entry and a credit to all in Lathom

'PRICELESS ASSETTS' Social Events Committee get off to a flying start



The venue and the glorious June weather were perfect for this first LPT social event. Early visitors for the Strawberry Tea at The Barleycorn in Blythe Lane left their cars in Lady Alice's Drive to allow room for latecomers - a reminder of the old link between Lathom House and Blythe Hall, just yards away. Our thanks go to Jenny and Charles Coombes for the use of their extensive garden which provided such a beautiful setting for the Bring & Buy, Plant and Cake Stalls. It was so easy to relax over tea, surrounded by green lawns and fragrant borders. Then a wander by the coolness of the pool, admiring the arum lilies. Behind the scenes a lot of work was going on, resulting in takings for the afternoon's event exceeding £200. Congratulations to the Social Events Group for providing such an enjoyable experience and making a priceless contribution to the Trust's assets

Madeleine Were

93 YEARS OF HAPPY LATHOM MEMORIES

by Madeleine Were

There was no need to look far afield for work if you lived on the Lathom estate in Queen Victoria's time. Job opportunities lay all around as young Martha Leyland was about to discover when she left school.

The Countess, Lady Alice, knew Martha's uncle managed a dressmaking firm in York so she encouraged her to go north to learn sewing skills under his professional eye, after which she came home and made clothes for the Lathom daughters. Martha's workroom must have had its share of light and sunshine because it was lit by the centre round window which can be seen in photographs of the house. This is one of stories related to me by Martha's daughter - Ethel (Hettie) Webster who died peacefully, aged 93, at Arranmore Residential Home in July.

Hettie was always ready to recount tales of life with the Lathom family and she had amassed a collection of wonderful old photographs which were drawn on by historical societies and the media.

Her mother, she said, never forgot the day when Lord Randle, son of the first Earl, was given a rousing welcome home from hospital after falling down the hold of his ship. Along with other children from Lathom School, she lined the drive waving her Union Jack and singing lustily 'For he's a jolly good fellow'.

Another memory was watching the chef in the kitchen chipping away at a big block of ice - probably from the ice house in the grounds - until it took on the form of a pony and trap. Then it was filled with two kinds of ice cream, paraded in front of the guests in the dining room and returned again to the kitchen hardly touched.

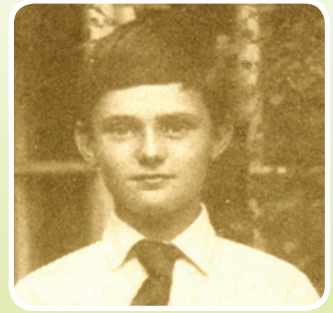
Hettie had her own recollections of the friendly personality of Edward Bootle Wilbraham, the third Earl.

She and a friend were cycling down Blythe Lane when they heard laughter. The young Lord Lathom, Noel Coward and Ivor Novello were having a great time in the grounds of Blythe Hall bouncing up and down on pogo sticks, but they found time to pause and chat to the girls over the hedge.

The same high spirits marked the two concerts which were put on to celebrate the opening of the Lathom Club, now the Scout Hall. Hettie saw both performances and told me that Lord Lathom's famous friends signed their names on the wall at the back of the stage, but the signatures were painted out a year later.

Saturday nights saw a confetti dance for estate families in the club. So much confetti - provided free, was thrown that it lay thick on the floor by the end of the evening.

Blythe Hall snippets



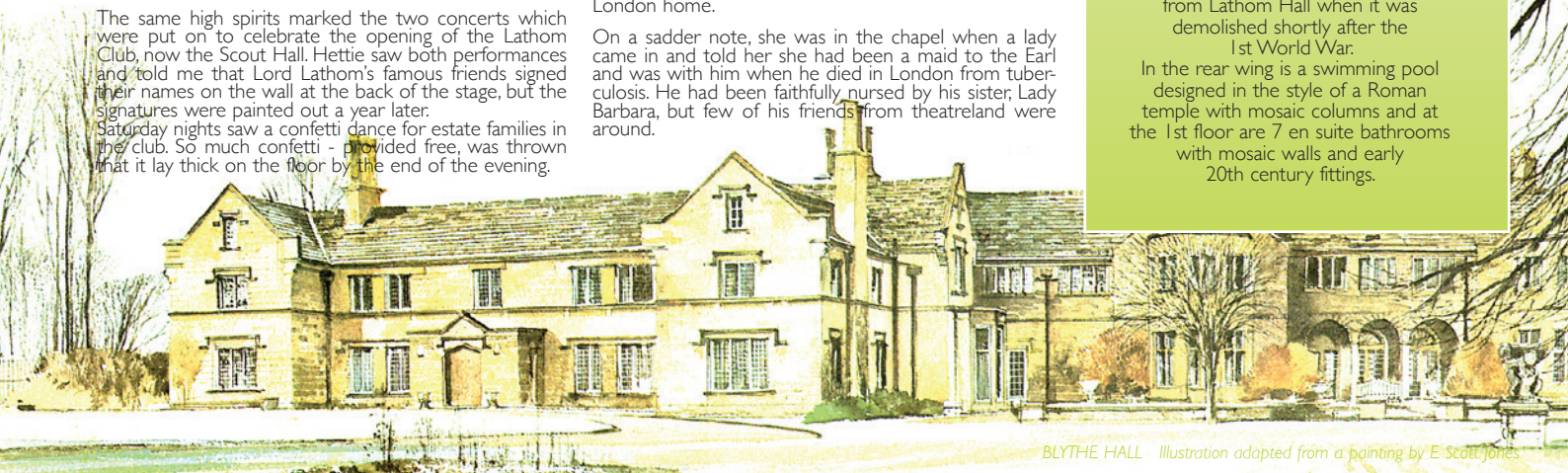
The young 3rd Earl of Lathom

Blythe Hall probably originated in the late 16th or early 17th century but was altered in the early 19th century before being radically remodelled and enlarged in 1920 as a residence to replace Lathom Hall for the 3rd Earl of Lathom.

The interior consists of an open hall with a dramatic 2-storey colonnaded Ionic screen to a staircase occupying most of the rear wall.

A room to the right has elaborate panelling said to have been removed from Lathom Hall when it was demolished shortly after the 1st World War.

In the rear wing is a swimming pool designed in the style of a Roman temple with mosaic columns and at the 1st floor are 7 en suite bathrooms with mosaic walls and early 20th century fittings.



BLYTHE HALL Illustration adapted from a painting by E. Scott Jones

WHAT'S IN A NAME ?



Field and place-names are important indicators of past activities in the landscape.

Lathom was first recorded as **Latune** in the **Domesday Book** accounts of 1086. The name is probably derived from the Old Norse **hlathum**, meaning 'at the barns', and **hlatha** 'a barn'.

A detailed search of place and field-names in Lathom will be amongst the wealth of undiscovered treasures to be investigated by Trust volunteers from the local community.

Jazz @ the Barn raises nearly a £1,000 for LPT



Jazz at the Barn, which took place in September. Such fund raising support is crucial to the Lathom Park Trust if we are to fully benefit from the exciting grant aided projects ahead.

STOP..PRESS..STOP PRESS..STOP PRESS

DON'T MISS OUR TRADITIONAL
PLOUGHMAN'S & SKITTLES NIGHT
NOV.17th, £5 (Bring your own ale)
GET YOUR TICKETS RIGHT NOW
TELEPHONE: 01704 893083