The Trust’s successful application for substantial Heritage Lottery funding enabled us to start the third phase of our Historic Lathom Project in May 2009.

One of the key aims of the archaeological investigations into the site of Lathom House and its medieval landscape was to find the extent of the ‘long lost’ castle. In the early days of the project the team soon found that the conventional geophysical equipment in use was not penetrating deep enough into the ground to detect any building remains associated with the medieval house.

Our salvation came in the guise of Martin Roseveare of ArchaeoPhysica (specialist providers of surveys for archaeology) who, after discussions with Oxford Archaeology North (project managers for the Trust) and project directors Steve Baldwin and Jamie Quartermaine, came up with the latest state-of-the-art geophysical equipment, which involved using Ground Penetrating Radar. This could penetrate down to remarkable depths, in excess of ten metres, enabling the team to discover a late-medieval building surviving deep below a thick layer of 18th century landscaping.

Trenching began with eager anticipation, revealing civil war demolition, containing numerous musket balls, medieval walls, cobbled floors, a cobbled yard and what appeared to be a path leading to the threshold of a large medieval building. With a bit of detective work, we are now able to reconstruct part of the line of the moat, and we anticipate its diameter could be in the region of 305m.

Just to put that into perspective, Lancaster Castle is only 120m across; Warwick Castle is 160m across; the Tower of London is 230m across; Alnwick Castle at its longest is 225m; Bamburgh Castle is 206m long and the large Pickering Castle is 185m along its longest axis.

"We are talking here of a seriously large and important defensive structure." It is very important to stress that our project would have achieved nothing without the commitment of our volunteer team, whose hard work and efforts, often in awful weather conditions, produced these momentous historical results. However, the project could not have even got off the ground without the full co-operation of NSG Pilkington Group and other landowners. Our special thanks go out to everyone concerned.

This very brief report cannot do justice to the fantastic success of the project and there is still much to be done to detail the many findings. A technical report is being written and the Trust will be publishing a popular booklet highlighting the exciting results, as well as expanding our website.

Contributed by Steve Baldwin and Jamie Quartermaine

Lord Derby becomes Patron of Lathom Park Trust

Friends and Trustees welcomed Lord Derby and his young family when they visited the excavation site to see the remains of their long lost ancestral seat.

Pictured L to R: Louise Ward, David Dunn, Elizabeth Hayton, Steve Baldwin, Lady Henrietta Stanley, Hon. Oliver Stanley, Lord Derby, Lord Edward Stanley, John Harlow, Susan Dunn, Peter Ferguson, Pam Nanson, Paul Keyes

Happy volunteers - it couldn’t have happened without them.
**SOCIAL EVENTS**

**Make a note in your diaries!**

**2 GREAT FUTURE EVENTS**

**Saturday 24th July**

In the unique setting of Lathom’s recently disclosed

**Toffee Roundhouse Settlement**

**Summer BBQ**

**£10**

**Café Society**

**LOOK OUT FOR FULL DETAILS LATER**

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**Edward Lear and Lathom**

Last year we were contacted by Charles Napien, an independent art historian, formerly the Drawings and Watercolours Curator of the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester, who was in the process of sourcing material for an exhibition of the landscape art of Edward Lear, to be held at the Woodrow Trust, Dove Cottage, Grasmere. The exhibition was to focus on Lear’s visit to Ireland in 1835 and his tour of North Lancashire, Westmorland and Cumberland in 1838. Many of the works for the exhibition had never been seen before and we were surprised and delighted to be informed that two of the pictures were of Lathom (one of Lathom Park and School, drawn on 17th September, 1835, and one of Lathom House, drawn the following day).

These are in the private Hugh Wolfe collection, and the Lathom Park Trust now has special permission to reproduce these drawings.

Edward Lear was a prolific and talented artist, cartoonist and poet, but he is probably most well-known for his nonsense poems “The Owl and the Pussy Cat”. He was born in 1812 in Highgate, London, and died in 1888 in San Remo, Italy, where he is buried. He never married. He spent his young adulthood working primarily as an animal artist and it is thought that whilst he was painting portraits at the Zoological Society of London in 1831 for his illustrations of the Prototheca or Puffer (published in 1832) he met Edward Stanley, 13th Earl of Derby. Lord Derby had a large private menagerie of birds and animals at Knowsley and he invited Lear to draw some of them. Lear stayed for long periods over several years at Knowsley and became popular with the family. His cartoons and poems written especially for the Derby children included “The Book of Nonsense”. Lear was introduced by the Earl to many of the grand households and families in Lancashire and Cheshire, and it was natural that he should be regularly invited to Lathom House by Baron Skelmersdale; a close relative by marriage of the Derby family.

Lear was also a prolific letter-writer and in one of his letters, dated 19th May 1837, from Knowsley Hall, he describes the death of a pony (a childhood friend) he writes, “Although I wrote to you yesterday, there is a possibility you may not have got my note, as I forgot to “mail it“ to Lord Skelmersdale, & the porter at Grosmont Spire may have been oblivious amiss its being put in the post. I lounged with & took leave of the lordly people, but they were all in a beatitude going to the drawing room, so I couldn’t ask them to frank it just then.”

This letter is one from a collection held in the Frederick Wame Archives.

The present (19th) Earl of Derby still owns the 13th Earl of Derby’s original paintings and books, including many of Lear’s original paintings of animals, but when the 13th Earl died in 1831, his measure, which included the skins of many of the aviary and menagerie animals and which had been presented for the British Museum, was instead bequeathed to the people of Liverpool.

The collection was the foundation of the Liverpool Museum (now National Museum Liverpool). compiled by Susan Dunn

A F R I E N D I N E E D S - 5000 more historical Lathom items from John

John Hunter Knowles

John has been a friend of Lathom Park Trust for many years. Apart from being our Website designer (which is currently being glanced at and produced) he produced world premier shows in The Lathom Club at the early 2000s, based on the life and plays of the 3rd Earl of Lathom.

He now has plans to write and produce a book on the 3rd Earl of Lathom for the past eight years and it is in the process of being published in 2010. However, George, Patry and John have also produced items, such as: The Lathom Album (www.lathomalbum.com) to provide a detailed arts is life history of the Earl of Lathom for future students. He has asked the people of Lathom for their help in his research; John works as a designer in the world of digital media, developing websites, video and audio products. He is currently a contributor to the literary reviews of the composer, actor and playwright Sir Noel coward; the playwright Sir Terence Rattigan and the composer and writer of musicals, Julian Slade.

His recent work has appeared at the Festival of Performance and Design in San Francisco, follow on exhibitions in Los Angeles and New York.

John Hunter Knowles – a very busy man – and we thank him for his continuing involvement in the ever increasing achievements of Lathom Park Trust.

Making a start in the Walled Garden

Shelley may wander whether the Trust total ‘just lost interest’ in the Lathom Walled Garden – after all, couldn’t it (after the Jonathon Rossberg area and walls fall, it remains a potentially hazardous project. However, Paul Kenyon and Andrew Mason along with friend Charles Drey, have spent a great deal of time designing how best to protect the area and we are pleased to announce that a £3500 grant from the National Lottery has now been received, as the Trust is a registered charity under the lottery rules, which means that there is potentially an input of £3500 for the project. As such, there is potential for the scheme to go ahead, and it will be a great start for the project.

Paul’s Lathom Walks and Talks in great demand

Since launching his first illustrated talk on the POSTED HISTORY OF LATHOM earlier this year for the Ormskirk Clock Tower Rotary Club, demand for Trustee Paul Kenyon’s talks seem to have increased by the day. It is now fully booked for the National Trust at Ormskirk, the Oddfellows at Skelmersdale & Upholland Family History Society, West Lancashire Heritage Association and a talk for Barrow L geht Club, demand for Trustee Paul Kenyon’s talks seem to have increased by the day.

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More childhood memories

Another recent visitor to Blythe Hall was actress Susan Shaw, to see the Lathom she remembered from childhood. ‘Ned’ Lathom, the 3rd Earl was her Godfather and her mother acted on the stage with him at the Lathom Club. Her father was Commanding Officer of the Remount Depot at the time.

Behind many of these brief snippets which are constantly emerging from Trust members and friends, there will be a fascinating story to justify volumes!

‘Shakespeare and Lathom’– more interesting connections

William Shakespeare and John Salusbury: what was their relationship?

More fascinating Lathom connections are emerging from John Idris-Jones’s continuing research into Shakespeare’s ‘lost years’ from his detailed study of Shakespeare’s association with Welsh poet John Salusbury. John Salusbury married Ursula, daughter of Henry Stanley, 4th Earl of Derby who was said to be the second richest person in Britain after the monarch, his main house being at Lathom and described as a huge castle like fortress near Ormskirk.

John Idris-Jones believes that his interpretation of the works of both Shakespeare and Salusbury may suggest an important underlying relationship between the two writers. John’s proposition should be studied in its full context, which embodies many other details supporting his ‘Lancashire Theory’ of Shakespeare’s presence in Lathom during the 1580’s, teaching the Stanley’s children, acting as singer, master and musician and working on theatricals.

Trust members wishing to learn more of John’s detailed analysis of the numerous poems, social, political and personal (possibly romantic) influences which brought both Salusbury and Shakespeare together - please contact Lathom Park Trust.

What’s in a name?

Peter Latham and his son Richard got in touch with us last summer, in connection with their ‘family history’ project. Peter’s great-grandfather had commissioned a family tree’ tracing back as far as the 11th century, linking their name Latham to the family of Lathom, notably the “Eagle Child” Oskatel (Thomas) de Lathom who moved to Astbury, in Cheshire. (A stained glass window there includes a version of the Lathom arms).

We were delighted to welcome Peter during his ‘history trip’ around the northwest. Whilst he had seen the Lathom House remains previously, we were able to show him Lathom Park Chapel and its historical connections. Peter very kindly gave us a copy of his fascinating ‘family tree’ for our records.

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LATHOM PLANS FOR FUTURE

Probably the most comprehensive survey of Lathom and its people ever undertaken has just been completed.

The process began in October 2008 when the Parish Council successfully applied for a grant from the National Lottery Awards with the aim of showing how the people of Lathom would like Lathom to develop in future years. Lathom Park Trust and other local organisations, supported by West Lancashire Borough Council, played an important role in determining the conclusions. It was particularly reassuring that the conservation of historical and environmental issues emerged as top priorities, including the replacement of the old Lathom Club with a similar structure, incorporating the historic stage and proscenium arch, famous for its connections with the 3rd Earl and his theatrical friends.