

NEWSLETTER

3 YEARS ON The real challenge ahead

In three short years, the mysterious and legendary has crystallised into exciting reality.

Beneath Lathom's calm tranquillity, there has developed an underlying layer of frantic activity, involving the local community, academics, historians, archaeologists, writers and national heritage organisations.

This culmination of enthusiastic interest has created an explosion of information exceeding far beyond the most 'wishful of thinking'.

From discoveries of Ironage and Roman settlements, 5000 year old artefacts, the legendary Medieval Palace Fortress, the Northern Court and political influences of Lathom, Shakespeare and the Medieval Festival of Plays, to the ancient Walled Garden and possibly a whole medieval village, the sheer escalation of 'finds' could not have been imagined.

Such success brings with it the frustrations of time, or more precisely, the lack of it, with new developments gaining pace almost weekly and all our voluntary project groups working constantly and intensely to decide priorities and deadlines.

A recent informal gathering of members and Trustees highlighted the many shortcomings which could arise - something as simple as not knowing when various events are to take place - and tended to epitomise a common communication problem between respective groups and members. It was little consolation to learn that the Trust's voluntary human resources are being stretched to their limits in the administrative functions and additional structural support is urgently needed to cope with the ever expanding success.

Membership is continually growing as more and more people become aware of the wide and diverse range of activities that are available to them. The national, local and international media are also taking a keen interest in our work.

To sustain such progress the Trustees need administrative help.

Lathom Park Trust is a Registered Charity and Limited Company. It is crucial that we operate accordingly and to assist the Trustees in these functions we need a Membership Secretary, a Treasurer and a Minute Secretary. **Please, please, please** let us know if you are able to offer any support.

Events and discoveries have taken us far beyond what three years ago may have been just wishful thinking. We must act quickly to put in place a support structure that will do justice to the deserving Lathom Park Trust and Membership.

Full details inside
**LATHOM
HERITAGE
FESTIVAL**
SOMETHING
FOR ALL THE FAMILY
Sept 12, 13, 14

MORE DISCOVERIES SOCIAL EVENTS
EXHIBITION LAUNCH COMMUNICATION
SHAKESPEARE'S LOST YEARS



Membership Fees

A Membership Renewal Form is enclosed with this Newsletter. Completed forms may be handed in at one of our desks during the Heritage Festival. With the widespread growth of members it has become imperative that the quality and frequency of our communications are adapted to meet the justified expectancies of our members. Voluntary effort plays a major part in the Trust's activities, but the principle unavoidable expense is in the cost of postage. Unfortunately we have to adjust our Membership fees to accommodate this factor - From November 1st the new fees will be as follows:
£7 Single £10 Partner/Family to endorse the settlement.

A Roman trackway has now been found to run through the western edge of the settlement. Although there is



Historic Lathom Chapel - venue for unique exhibition

Unique Exhibition of historic Lathom paintings launches Heritage Festival

Friday 12th September sees the launch of the Lathom Heritage Festival in the historic 15c Lathom Park Chapel.

An exhibition of 18c paintings from the Sparrow Collection featuring early members of the Bootle-Wilbraham family and other Lathom paintings, with extracts from the personal scrapbook of the 1st Earl of Lathom's sister, the Hon. Rose Bootle-Wilbraham, provides a fascinating insight into our heritage.

The event is rounded off with an illustrated presentation by author and playwright, John Knowles on the three Earls of Lathom and concludes with refreshments and buffet.

Demand for tickets has been such that a repeat of this event will take place on Saturday 13th September at 7.30pm

Tickets are £5 and available from Jenny Coombes, Phone 01695 577764

Social Events Diary

The Trust owe a debt of gratitude to Beryl Whittington who has established and steered the Social Events Committee, so successfully, through our 3 formative years.

Jenny Rushton has now taken over the Chairman's role with Jenny Coombes as Secretary and Janet Pope as Treasurer.

Many of the social events held have sold out quickly and efforts are being made to communicate forthcoming activities well in advance to avoid disappointment. The current twice yearly Newsletter will be supplemented by separate mailings of Event Bulletins and sent to all members.

A diary of provisional future events has been compiled as a starting point for general guidance, with more precise details following as things develop.

We thank the Committee for their enormous support in what is an increasingly important role for the future success of the Lathom Park Trust.

PROPOSED PROGRAMME FOR NEXT 12 MONTHS

2003 September 12th & 13th, *EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS, Lathom Park Chapel
 2003 September 13th, LATHOM HERITAGE FESTIVAL, Pilkingtons Exhibition Centre
 2003 September 14th, GUIDED WALKS, LATHOM PARK & GARDENS, Scout Hall
 2003 Nov/Dec., CHRISTMAS COFFEE MORNING, Jenny Coombes, Blythe Lane
 2003 5th December, **CHRISTMAS BRASS BAND CONCERT, Stanley Institute
 2004 Jan/Feb., TRIP TO WIGAN THEATRE (with refreshments)
 2004 HISTORICAL COACH TOUR. (Lathom Family sites)
 2004 JAZZ IN THE BARN
 2004 CROXTETH WALLED GARDEN TRIP
 2004 Summer; BAR-B-Q.
 2004 Summer; OPEN GALA DAY, Old Sutch Farm, Meadow Lane
 2004 'BIT OF A DO' IN MARQUEE
 2004 'LATHOM AND SHAKESPEARE' PRESENTATION

Ticket enquiries: * Jenny Coombes 01695 577764 ** Janet Pope 01704 894540



Chairman Jenny Rushton



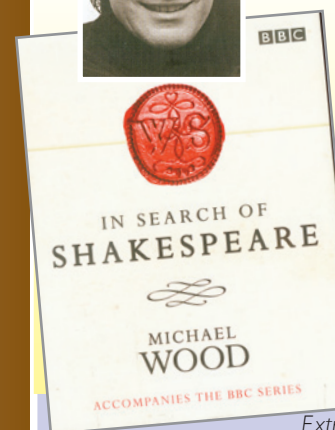
'TIME TEAM' BEATEN TO IT Staggering new Lathom discoveries

LATHOM HOUSE THE FINAL PROOF ?

If and when 'Time Team' eventually turn up at Lathom to 'discover' the site of the great medieval fortified house, you at least will know that they were almost a decade too late to take the credit for the 'discovery'.

Under the blazing hot sun of February 2003, the final excavation of the West Wing site took place, ending seven years of investigation into Lathom House. A team from Matrix Archaeology, led by Trustee, Mark Fletcher, opened a large trench, revealing the remains of the 18th century house, and beneath these, massive sandstone walls and cobbled surfaces from the palace-fortress of the Earls of Derby.

An abundance of 'finds' included late medieval pottery, two 17th century toothbrushes, and a lead pistol ball.



SHAKESPEARE'S 'LOST YEARS' TO BE FOUND IN LATHOM ?

THE LOST YEARS' FOUND ?

On this reading, then, Shakespeare could have been with the Queen's Men through the late eighties - perhaps even before they came to Stratford in 1557. They were above all a touring company, going as far as Scotland and Dublin. Through provincial town accounts their tour itineraries in those years can be traced. Some venues still survive: Leicester guildhall, the common halls in York and Norwich, Church House in Sherborne. They liked the prosperous towns of East Anglia and the south coast. In eight out of their first eleven seasons they toured the north, playing at the residences of big Lancashire families such as the Stanleys at Knowsley and New Park, and Lord Strange at Lathom - important stops on politically motivated tours. Even a theatre company could help Walsingham keep an eye on families whose loyalty was suspect. (And could that be how Shakespeare first made the Lancashire connection that would be important later in his career?)

Extract from Michael Wood's recently published book 'In search of Shakespeare'

NOT TO BE MISSED

FIND OUT ALL ABOUT LATHOM'S LATEST SENSATIONAL PREHISTORIC & MEDIEVAL DISCOVERIES from the actual Archaeologists themselves

IRONAGE & MEDIEVAL FINDS REVEALED ANCIENT LANES & EARTHWORKS FOUND CIVIL WAR ARMOURY & UNIFORMS
 ART EXHIBITION LATHOM'S THEATRE THROUGH THE AGES
 GUIDED LATHOM PARK WALKS STAND DISPLAYS & BOOK STALL
 REFRESHMENTS BOUNCY CASTLE & KIDDIES CORNER
 WORLD WAR I REMOUNT DEPOT EXOTIC WALL GARDEN DISPLAYS
 EXPERTS LECTURES & PRESENTATIONS

Full details below
LATHOM HERITAGE FESTIVAL
 SOMETHING FOR ALL THE FAMILY
 Sept 12, 13, 14



ALL VENUES IN HALL LANE, LATHOM, Nr. ORMSKIRK, LANCASHIRE

15c Lathom Park Chapel

Exhibition of 18th century paintings
 Sketches and writings from a Bootle-Wilbraham family scrapbook
 Illustrated presentation on the three Earls of Lathom by author John Knowles
 Buffet and refreshments

7.30pm Fri 12th & Sat 13th Sept
 Admission £5 by ticket only
 Phone. 01695 577764 for tickets

Pilkington's Exhibition Centre

Ground floor exhibition featuring Lathom's latest archaeological & archive discoveries
 Childrens corner and Bouncy Castle, refreshments
 First floor presentations by Nigel Neal, Landscape Historian and Author;
 Ron Cowell, Curator of Prehistoric Archaeology, Liverpool Museum;
 Jamie Quartermaine, Oxford University (North) Archaeology Unit

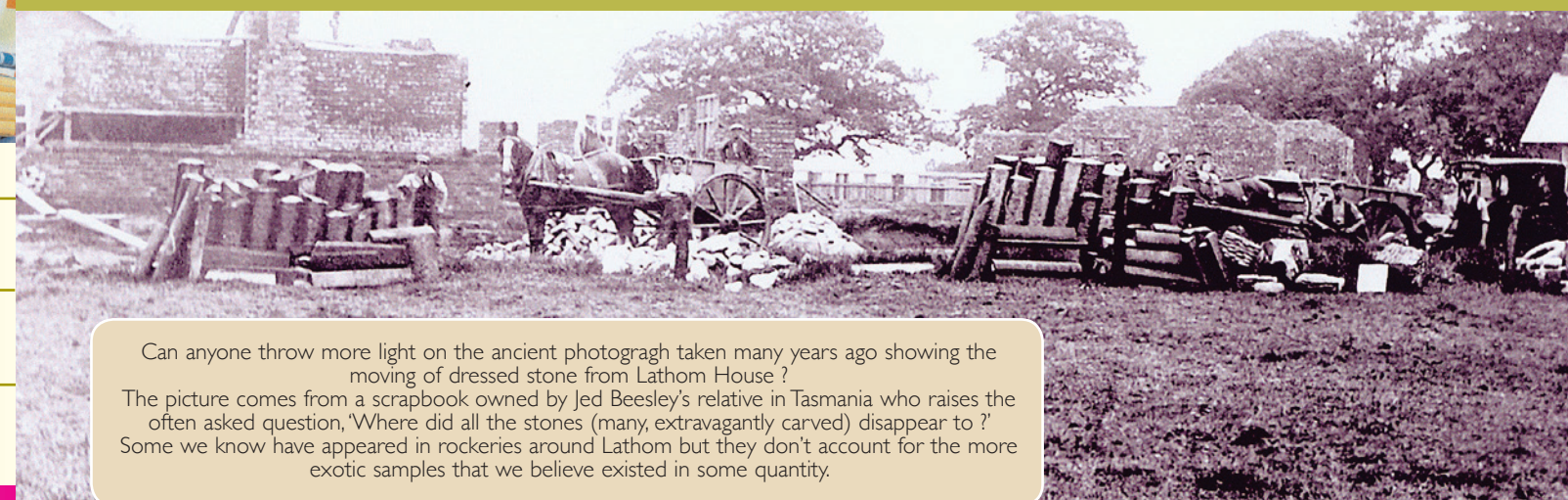
2pm Saturday 13th Sept
 Admission Free

Lathom Scout Hall

Guided walks through Lathom Park and Pleasure Gardens, taking in Lathom Chapel,
 Stonemason demonstration and excavation story
 Walks commence every hour throughout day from Scout Hall
 Refreshments and snacks

From 11am Sunday 14th Sept
 Admission Free
 Phone. 01695 585102 to book time

MISSING LATHOM STONES CLUES FROM TASMANIA



Can anyone throw more light on the ancient photograph taken many years ago showing the moving of dressed stone from Lathom House ?
 The picture comes from a scrapbook owned by Jed Beesley's relative in Tasmania who raises the often asked question, 'Where did all the stones (many, extravagantly carved) disappear to ?'
 Some we know have appeared in rockeries around Lathom but they don't account for the more exotic samples that we believe existed in some quantity.

Ghosts of Lathom's Past - WHAT DID THE WOODCARVER SEE ?

In the early 1500's, an itinerant woodcarver was working under the supervision of Warden James Stanley in the construction of the choir in the Collegiate Church of Manchester. He carved two misericords, showing detailed representation of an impressive castle, with central polygonal tower, a curtain wall with mural towers, and a pedimented gatehouse.

One of these carvings was placed in the context of the Lathom 'Eagle & Child' legend, suggesting that the castle may well have been a representation of the long-destroyed Lathom House.

Excavation near to the site of the 18th century Leoni house revealed a broad rock-cut moat, and subsequent work by Lathom archaeologist, Steve Baldwin, along with members of BTC and other LPT archaeologists has shown that massive stone footings lie beneath the West Wing. After many years of speculation, it seems almost certain that the site of the 'Northern Court', principal residence of the noble house of Stanley, has been discovered.

No illustrations of this great 'palace-fortress' survive, but the unknown woodcarver may have left vital clues as to the appearance of the largest medieval house in the north-west of England

MF



Early 1500's woodcarver's impression of Lathom's palace fortress?

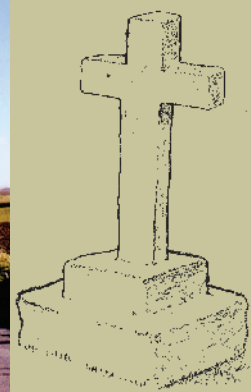
Two Hundred Years of Lathom History



We welcome Mark Hill to the Board of Trustees. Mark has lived in Sandy Lane, Lathom since birth. He is a fourth generation solicitor in Ormskirk with most of his ancestors for 200 years having lived in Lathom. Mark's great-grandfather, George Roper, was Agent to the First Earl of Lathom, living at 'Cranes Hall' and buried in Lathom Chapel. Grandfather, Fred C. Hill of 'Square House', Lathom,

followed his father, Charles Hill of 'The Firs' in Hall Lane as Steward to the Earls of Lathom. Mark brings a wealth of local knowledge to the Trust and is an enthusiastic member of our Archive Research Group, much of their findings being brought to light for the first time at the Lathom Heritage Festival's Saturday presentations in the Pilkington's Conference Centre.

LATHOM'S ANCIENT WAYSIDE CROSSES



Wayside crosses were once a feature of Lathom and surrounding areas, many being destroyed during the Reformation.

Whether such crosses were erected to mark land prior to deeds or whether their origin was purely devotional is uncertain, but it was reported about 130 years ago that funeral processions used them as resting places on their way to Burscough Priory. Other views on their origin refer to 'Dob' and 'Hob' being terms which frequently crop up in describing crosses. They are supposed to be the male and female goblins or fairies, who in ancient times were believed capable of leaping from one 'hob' stone to another.

Whatever the explanation - these were undoubtedly landmarks of significance and influence in West Lancashire's and Lathom's heritage and the Parish Council are keen to mark the sites of these important features in the Lathom landscape.

As a result they are continuing their endeavours to obtain local authority grants to mark and protect the ancient cross sites in Lathom, two of which are located in Hobb Cross Lane and Blythe Lane respectively.

'BRIGHT YOUNG THINGS' reviewed

The ambitious three performances of world premiere 'Bright Young Things' proved a great success.

Although stretching our resources to the full, it hopefully provided a satisfying experience for the many people involved.

A big thank you to all the local companies and organisations which played a crucial role in supporting the production, from lighting, stage sets and costuming to the floral decor and interior design of the hall.

The press and media again gave us good coverage and 'Lancashire Life' ran a two page feature in their July issue with photographs of many of the guests present.

Prints are available from Neil Hickson, tel. 01704 822378, if required.

