



# Newsletter



**FRIENDS OF LANCASHIRE ARCHIVES – MARCH 2012. No. 102**

## **Elizabeth (Liz) Wrigley, FLA Secretary and Newsletter Editor**

FLA members will already be aware that Elizabeth died suddenly on 25th January, at the age of just 62, following a cerebral haemorrhage. On 2nd February, following a moving service in a packed St Leonard's Downham – in which she had married John at the age of 17 – she was laid to rest in Christchurch Chatburn churchyard, close to her parents. It was good to see a sizeable contingent of FLA members at her funeral.

Liz had all but completed editing the Newsletter that you are reading, including the Questionnaire, which she enthusiastically devised as one of her many valuable contributions to the Task Group. I hope you will do her memory proud by giving as much thought to your answers as she did to the questions. Although she was famous for her wicked sense of humour, she took her FLA tasks very seriously, using her medical practice manager skills to great effect.

Her husband John, and daughter Veronica gave me every possible assistance, at such a difficult time, by downloading documents from her computer, and boxing up FLA papers for me to collect. Vicci McCann of the Archives staff has very kindly found time to undertake final editing, despite a hectic schedule.

Liz's death has come as a huge shock to a great many people, and the FLA will not be the only voluntary group which have been robbed of a hugely energetic friend. She was a key figure in the local WI, where her embroidery, baking, and jam-making skills will be missed, and was on the St Leonard's Parochial Church Council. She was a lauded performer and back-stage member of Clitheroe Parish Church Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society, and of Downham Stage 2. Before Liz's passion for local history led her to join the FLA committee, she had co-founded the Downham and Twiston History Group, and become secretary of the Red Rose Post-Card Club, "the largest postcard club in the North of England". She was also working on transcribing and ensuring the safekeeping of the Chatburn parish registers. In 2003, she published Walk around Downham, which is still in print. There was so much else that she was looking forward to doing.

## **Nigel Neil, FLA Chairman**

**BOOK NOW for the FLA event of the year !- 'MIDSUMMER HISTORY PICNIC'  
Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012      See next page for details and booking form.**

## **NEW FORMAT**

Elizabeth began the process of re-organising the newsletter, a first step to a brighter-looking product - information formerly on the front of the newsletter is now on the back page. The committee would appreciate your comments, and YOUR articles on anything relating to Archives, for future publication !

## **QUESTIONNAIRE**

A significant part of this newsletter is about FLA, and your committee trying to find out what different people see as the purpose of the organisation. We feel it is time to say 'what do the members want?' Attached is a questionnaire which we hope you will complete and return by hand or post to the Archives. Please take a little time to be part of this exercise.

## **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

If you think that you might NOT have paid your 2012 subscription, see back page of the Newsletter.

**BOOK NOW FOR THE FLA EVENT OF THE YEAR !**  
**'MIDSUMMER HISTORY PICNIC' - Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012**  
**Starting at 12 noon**



This event will be held in the lovely gardens of Christopher and Jess Mortimer at Mill Barn in Salmesbury Bottoms and will include 3 short talks on the history of the old mill, the creation of the present house and gardens from the ruins, and the history of gardens in general.

You can then picnic in the gardens and when replenished, explore. You will find among other things, a hidden temple, a folly, art works, an elegant summerhouse, and for the brave, Rapunzel's Tower across a rope bridge over the river.

Bring your own picnic and a little bit extra to add to a 'Jacob's Join' – drinks will be provided. There will be under-cover areas if the weather is un-obliging and, as Chris has his garden open to the public for several weekends in June, he is well equipped with seating and tables. There is parking in his field nearby.

Book soon, and we'll try to arrange car sharing for those without transport.

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**Friends of Lancashire Archives**

Charity Registration Number 518611

**FRIENDS'**  
**MID-SUMMER HISTORY PICNIC**  
**At Mill Barn, Salmesbury Bottoms, near Preston**

At the invitation of  
Christopher and Jess Mortimer

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012**  
**Starting at 12 noon**

**FLA members £8; Non-members £8.50**

**Contact: Barbara Pidcock**  
**Manor House, 1 Barncroft, Penwortham, Preston, PR1 0SX. Tel: 01772 743 859**



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**Mid-summer Picnic:** Please return booking form to:  
**Barbara Pidcock, Manor House, 1 Barncroft, Penwortham, PR1 0SX. Tel: 01772 743 859**

I would like to book ..... FLA member, and .... Non-member places.

Name(s).....

Address:.....

.....

Post Code: ..... Tel: No: .....

**I enclose a cheque for £ ..... payable to 'Friends of Lancashire Archives'**  
**Please enclose a STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE so that we can send you more details.**

FLA is 26 years old and times have changed since it was founded, but the way that FLA go about things has not kept up. The re-opening of Lancashire Archives last year, following refurbishment, has been a catalyst for your committee to take stock of what we do, and where we are going.

One of our main objectives is to encourage people to **USE** Lancashire Archives. We want people to understand that – while internet-based research can get you a certain distance along the road of genealogy and local history research - the experience of learning about the past can be much more rewarding by accessing Lancashire Archives' vast array of original documents.

We are also keen to know what our members feel about FLA, and what we can do to make our organisation and its activities more attractive to members. A **QUESTIONNAIRE** is attached to this newsletter – **PLEASE** take time to complete it and let us know what you would like and how you might be able to help FLA. We will also be printing copies for non-members, on coloured paper !

### **SO WHAT?**

An extract from our Constitution notes our 'purpose' or objective.....

“The object of the Association is the education of the public by promotion, support, assistance and improvement of the Lancashire [Archives] through the activity of the Association. The Association shall have power to:

- a) encourage, promote and assist in the development of the Association
- b) ... further the purpose of Lancashire [Archives] and encourage the development of the facilities afforded
- c) appoint representatives and delegates to any other bodies ...
- d) engage in, support and co-ordinate voluntary assistance, publishing, education, advertising, fund raising for specific acquisitions and other work for the furtherance of the above object ...

### **WELL DONE !**

FLA's major input has been the funding and co-funding of purchases of documents that would otherwise have been sold out of the public domain, besides equipment and printing costs, and recently the funding of cataloguing of Cyril Ainsworth's Clitheroe collection. FLA has contributed more than **£60,000** since it was formed, including many census microfilms and microfiches, and wills indexes. Recent highlights have included the Hewitson Diaries, Humphrey Repton's Lathom 'Red Book' landscape design, a Victorian Lathom House Theatre scrapbook, Dame Hylda Baker's papers, Abbot and Co's stained glass designs, Admiral Barrie's sextant patent, and most recently Royal Letters Patent of 1728 for the guide across Morecambe Bay.

A major piece of voluntary work has been the input of the Will Flatteners team – inaugurated by FLA – who contributed an estimated 200,000 hours, over a period of more than 20 years.

FLA members supply and maintain the tea room snacks, helping to make the room a welcoming rest area, particularly in view of the distance to eating places.

### **FLA Education & Social Time – we have enjoyed.....**

Lectures, **Workshops**, History walks, Social events, Fund raising events, Visits to other Archives.

### **YOU'VE GOT TALENT!**

We are looking for both ideas and volunteers to help revitalise the FLA. One suggestion is to provide a mentoring system for Lancashire Archives users – it can be daunting to use the facilities for the first time. Would you be willing to be a mentor at Lancashire Archives? What other ideas do YOU have, and can you spare some time to help usher in a new era for the FLA?

Lots of other issues are under discussion – please move **NOW** to the **QUESTIONNAIRE**..

# Friends of Lancashire Archives

## QUESTIONNAIRE 2012

**THE QUESTIONNAIRE IS VOLUNTARY AND CAN BE ANONYMOUS IF YOU WISH.** IF you would like us to know who you are, please complete your name and address at the end of the Questionnaire.

**PLEASE RETURN BY END OF April 2012**, in the box provided at Lancashire Archives' reception desk, or by post to FLA Questionnaire, c/o Lancashire Archives, Bow Lane, Preston, PR1 2RE.

### 1. **FLA EVENTS**

1.1 Have you attended any FLA events?  YES/NO Which event[s] did you attend? [use list below]

*Lecture*  yes/no *Workshop*  yes/no *History walk*  yes/no *Social event*  yes/no  
*Voluntary project*  yes/no *Fund raising event*  yes/no *Visit to other Archives*  yes/no

Comments .....

1.2 Did you enjoy the event(s)? ...On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much) .....

1.3 If no, can you say why? .....

1.4 Using the list above, what is your main area of interest for an event?  
.....

1.5 If it is not on the list, **what** would you like the FLA to arrange that would interest you?  
.....

1.6 Helping at an FLA event: I do already ..  yes/no I'd consider helping in the future ..  yes/no

In what capacity?- Taking part in a workshop [see question below] .....

- Help with catering .....
- Organising a walk [see question below]? .....
- Help with publicity? .....
- Other ideas .....

### 2. **NEWSLETTER**

2.1 Do you read your FLA newsletter? .....

- All of it? .....
- Bits of it? .....
- None of it? ..... If not, why not? .....

2.2 Is the newsletter too long? Too short? .....

2.3 If too long, what would you omit?  
.....

2.4 What would you like to see that is currently not in the newsletter?  
.....

2.5 Would you like to contribute to the newsletter? What could you like to write about?  
.....

2.6 Any other comments?  
.....  
.....

**3. How do we encourage more people to use the FACILITIES AT LANCASHIRE ARCHIVES ?**

3.1 How often have you used Lancashire Archives for research in the last 2 years?

Never 5 times or less More than 5 times more than once a month on average

Comments .....

3.2 How and where could we advertise/encourage users?

.....

3.3 How might we convince people that 'the real thing' not only complements online facilities but adds a new/better dimension to research?

.....

**4. VOLUNTEERING**

4.1 Could you help to keep the FLA notice board in the tearoom at Lancashire Archives up to date?

.....

4.2 Would you be able to take part in a voluntary project if Lancashire Archives was looking for more volunteers

e.g. On a similar basis to the will flattening project? .....

4.3 Would you feel able to help/mentor new or inexperienced users at Lancashire Archives?

.....

4.4 Would you welcome the help of a mentor when you visit Lancashire Archives?

.....

4.5 Are there any other areas of volunteering that you think FLA should consider?

.....

**5. LECTURES, TALKS & WORKSHOPS**

**LECTURES/TALKS**

5.1 What is your preferred topic for a lecture/talk?

.....

5.2 Do you have a preferred speaker?

.....

5.3 Could YOU give a lecture / talk on a historical / archives topic? If so, on what topic(s)?

.....

**WORKSHOPS/COURSES**

5.4 Do you prefer single or multi-topic workshops? .....

5.5 Would you like FLA to run workshops on a particular theme? e.g. 'Starting your family tree' /Poor Law/Public health/ etc., etc.

.....

5.6 What topic[s] would you like for a workshop or course?

.....

5.7 Would you like to join a team of other historians to talk for 30 minutes on **your own specific** research topic at a multi-topic workshop e.g. Family or local history research?

.....

6. **HISTORY/INTEREST WALKS**

6.1 Do you have any suggestions for a place the FLA could arrange a 'walk around' in 'historic' Lancashire? (i.e. pre-1974 Lancashire, including Merseyside, Greater Manchester, Furness)

.....

6.2 What would encourage you to attend a history walk day [or half day]?

.....

6.3 Would you be able to organise a history/interest walk in your local area ? [you could use an experienced local historian of your own choice, or do it yourself]

.....

6.4 Would you prefer to enjoy a 'walk' in the form of a talk or lecture using pictures and descriptions rather than actually taking part in the walk?

.....

7. **VENUES FOR EVENTS**

**Many of our events have been held at the Lancashire Archives (formerly 'Record Office') in Preston**

7.1 Would you find it easier to attend events outside Preston? If so, which town ? .....

7.2 Would you find it easier to attend events at a different venue in Preston? .....

7.3 If 'yes', please suggest somewhere for the FLA committee to investigate [e.g. Using a library, village or church hall, or other suitable venue] .....

.....

**PLEASE ADD ANY OTHER COMMENTS ABOUT FLA, WHAT IT DOES, AND HOW IT WORKS ?**

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.....  
.....  
.....

**The questionnaire can remain anonymous but if you would like us to know who you are please complete your name and address here [you may wish to include your email address]**

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.....  
.....

**If you are NOT YET A MEMBER OF FLA, would you like to join us?**

**Please contact the membership secretary: Janet Lane, 21 Elmhurst Road, Lytham St Annes, FY8 3JH**

**Tel: 01253 725323, Email: [jclane1@btinternet.com](mailto:jclane1@btinternet.com)**

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**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE.**

*Nigel Neil, Chairman, FLA*

**PLEASE LEAVE YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE  
IN THE BOX PROVIDED AT THE RECEPTION DESK AT LANCASHIRE ARCHIVES**

or return it by post to FLA Questionnaire, c/o Lancashire Archives, Bow Lane, Preston, PR1 2RE.

## LANCASHIRE ARCHIVES NEWS

### **Welcome back to Lancashire Archives!**

2011 was a challenging year for our service but we can now see and feel the benefits of all the work. The search-room is bright and light and (since the second week in January) warm; the contractor's cabins have gone and staff are looking forward to welcoming you back and to putting on an exciting programme of archive-related events in 2012.

Many of the search-room changes were implemented in response to your views, and I am pleased to hear that you generally appreciate the improvements we made over the summer.

*'I think the new layout is brilliant';*

*'Great new look LRO - I think the new place is a great improvement - well done. I look forward to using it 'What impressed me most was the positive and helpful attitude of the staff on duty at the document counter'*

These are just three of the many positive comments we've received from Friends in the first weeks since re-opening. However I am committed to providing the best possible archive service and I do want to know how we can make things even better for our users. I hold an informal users' group twice a year and, in December, users attending the forum drew up a list of things they don't like about the re-organisation, and a list of things which would make life easier. We are working on these lists and I reported on progress at User Group on Tuesday 6 March.

I would like the Friends of Lancashire Archives to become more closely involved in our service.

**Jacquie Crosby**  
**Archives Service Manager**

## LANCASHIRE ARCHIVES RE-OPENS

### **Impressions of the re-opening day preview, Friday October 21<sup>st</sup> 2011**

The public research facilities were closed over the summer months for a refit to upgrade the air conditioning system. Additionally improvements were made to the decor and re-organisation of the layout to make it more efficient from a management view, and to rename and re-label the establishment in line with its function. Lancashire Archives are thereby differentiated from the Registry of Births and Deaths office nearby, making it clearer for visiting members of the public.

The basic structural layout of the offices was maintained with minor revisions to the locations of some areas reducing interference between fiche and film readers and internet users, and so providing a quieter more relaxed environment for those studying books, maps and consulting archive requests. The printed archives area is now separated from the computerised section by the front enquiry desk and includes a set of newly modernised glass partitions and display cabinets. Changes included the introduction of updated seating and uniformly modernised desks with electronic ports and power supplies at each workstation.

A tour of the storage facilities took groups through the keypad protected bridge across the road to 'The Keep', where archives are stored in miles of cleverly arranged storage which allows easy access. A quick technical lecture was given on a few aspects of conservation with examples showing typical damage due to the depredations of light, humidity, dust, insects and rodents.

Preservation employing judicious application of repair pieces using gelatine adhesive to restore and recreate readable documents can be made before cataloguing and storage in acid-free packing

materials. A controlled low temperature and humidity environment is deemed 'best practice' for long term storage. Paper, vellum and parchment samples were shown where damp incoming documents and crispy dried-out ones were due to be recovered for future generations by patient and skilled restoration.

The highlight which grabbed most people's attentions was a visit to 'The Dungeons' to see the flat-bed box cutting machine. This was explained and demonstrated by the staff whose job it was to fulfil orders for many different sizes and shapes of archive boxes. Clever computer software controlled the movement of the cutting heads and folding rollers. The software also minimised wastage by calculating the best way to fit shapes into the available area on each sheet. The packaging is available to other organisations to order.

An impressive display of many old documents and historical objects demonstrated the wide variety in the Archives collection. A quick glance at early published railway timetables and fare structures showed that males were charged double the fare of females or children for railway journeys in Victorian times. Admiralty charts on display illustrated the Ribble estuary with its sandbanks and channels that were of topical interest in view of the recent issues on cockle harvesting.

One glorious old parchment on view was written on behalf of Queen Elizabeth I and signed by her in 1602. It was a Declaration of Friendship towards the Court of the ruler of China intended for delivery by mariners who were expecting to discover the North-West Passage as a trade route to the Far East. A startling point about this document was that it was in plain English (though of its time) and not in Latin or secretary hand. It was suitably embellished and had a wax seal, and had been folded to fit a tin-washed metal box of about A4 size for its journey to Northern Canada – and back again, as the explorer's ships never reached their intended destination! Presumably it was never reclaimed by Elizabeth as she died in 1603, and so it is believed, passed down through the Captain's family until it came into the possession of Lancashire Archives.

## **An FLA member**

### **Letters from the Somme**

Our speaker for the "Festive Treat", on 25<sup>th</sup> November, was John Pearson who spoke about the sixteen letters sent to his grandmother Annie Coulthurst from her nephew Henry Pearson during World War I. The letters were addressed to "My Dear Aunt". John had always known about these letters, but he was overwhelmed when they were given into his safe keeping by his uncle Cyril Coulthurst. Henry Pearson, born in 1895, came from a rural background. When the War began he was working with horses on Lord Crawshaw's Hareden Estate at Dunsop Bridge. In 1915 he joined the North Lancashire Regiment, and we were told that he cycled over to Hall Trees Farm, Longridge, to visit his Aunt Annie, wearing full dress uniform.

Letters sent by the soldiers had to be written in pencil so that the censors could block out anything they considered would be helpful to the enemy. We were shown one of these erasures in thick black pencil. John felt that Henry, as an only son, could probably be more frank in letters to his aunt than he could to his parents, although no letters to his parents seem to have survived. Henry relates the daily happenings in his training and asks how the families in his own area are coping. He was probably homesick and desperate to have news from home.

His early letters describe his time in "G Company" at Felixstowe which he says is nice but is "not for young fellows". In the first letter, dated 1/9/1915, he says that after a fortnight, in which he has written a dozen letters, he has had only two replies. One of these was from his aunt and he thanks her for it. He talks about relaxing at the YMCA and about the local people who "do talk



funny". He asks that his melodeon be sent to him and relates that the soldiers have two baths per week, three meals a day, and that he is learning to swim in the sea. In his fifth letter, dated 21/10/1915, he talks about having three days leave before going to the front. It was at the front that he spent Christmas 1915 under shell fire. There was no Christmas dinner – just two biscuits and he says "I wish it was over".

A letter came from St. Luke's, Dublin dated 9/3/1916. Henry reveals that he has had pneumonia and is too weak to walk. By 4/4/1916 he was "knocking about a bit" but says that he has had "two or three near dos". It is not known whether he had left Dublin before the "Easter Rising" of 24/4/1916. By 9/7/1916 he was back in Felixstowe. His mind at this time is on home and haymaking but he believes he will be back at the front soon. This time there was to be no return home. He was seriously injured in battle of the Somme and died from his injuries on the 1/10/1916. He is buried at Barlin cemetery, Pas de Calais.

## **Elaine Berry**

### **An Evening with Friends**

The Friends already provide wonderful support by volunteering and by raising money which allows us to purchase archives and other items – such as the welcome folders for new users and new signage - which we couldn't afford from our budget, and I am very grateful for this. To thank you, and to give Friends who haven't yet seen our refurbished search-room a chance to do so, I invited you to a special open evening on Friday 2 March, and nearly 50 Friends came.

For me, as archives service manager, it was an opportunity to re-engage our Friends with the archives they support. The people who came were able to look at documents from all the collections which the Friends have bought, or helped to purchase, over the last 25 years. They were able to chat to staff and to look behind the scenes in the conservation workshop and discover the work which had gone into their latest purchase - the Letters Patent of King George II appointing a guide across the sands of Morecambe Bay in 1728 - and to see inside one of the eight strongrooms where Lancashire's archives are stored.

At least 3 people volunteered to offer their services in listing some of our collections. Some saw previously unexplored potential for their own family or local history research, and we hope to see them again soon in the searchroom. Others just enjoyed a relaxed evening, browsing through the shelves or documents, talking to friends and making new discoveries.

## **Jacque Crosby**

### **Royal Letters Patent of 1728 for the guide across Morecambe Bay**

This manuscript is the most recent purchase by the FLA and was on show - newly conserved by Lancashire Archives' workshop, and resplendent in a purpose-made display box - at the Friends evening on 2<sup>nd</sup> March. In order to do it proper justice, we are holding over a piece about the document, and about the King's / Queen's Guides, till the next newsletter.

#### **CATALOGUING UPDATE, NOVEMBER 2011 (none for December 2011)**

DDX 373 Plans of the foreshore at Lytham 1922 & 1945; proposed quay at Lancaster 1848; Southport pier extension 1862.

DDX 2871 Friends of Briars Hey, Rainhill, 20<sup>th</sup> century

SS/accession 11085 Board of Trade Running Agreements, account of voyages and crew lists for SS Ephraim, SS Marion and SS Eulalia, all of Fleetwood 1907-1913.

**LANCASHIRE ARCHIVES**  
**TIMES OF OPENING**

**MONDAY TO FRIDAY**

Mon: 0900 – 1700  
Tue: 0900 – 2030  
Wed: 0900 – 1700  
Thu: 1000 – 1700  
Fri: 0900 – 1700

**SATURDAY OPENING**

LA opens on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month 10am to 4pm  
**Please Note** that no documents are produced 12.30-1.30pm

**Saturday openings 2012**

**14 April, 12 May, 9 June, 14 July, 11 Aug, 8 Sept, 13 Oct, 10 Nov, 8 Dec**

Opens an hour later on Thursday morning, because of staff training.

**LANCASHIRE ARCHIVES TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Main Archives Office number 01772 533039

LA fax number 01772 533050

LA e-mail: [record.office@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:record.office@lancashire.gov.uk)

Web: <http://www.archives.lancashire.gov.uk>

**FLA COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**Chairman** Nigel Neil, 5 Hillside, Lancaster, LA1 1YH Email: [nigelrjneil@googlemail.com](mailto:nigelrjneil@googlemail.com)

**Tel: 01524 844728 Mobile: 07968 621 530**

**Vice-Chairman** Brenda Fox, 12 Derby Road, Garstang, PR3 1EU **Tel: 01995 604379**

**Minutes secretary** John Wilson

**Treasurer** Mike Turner, 32 Victoria Road, Fulwood, Preston. PR2 8NE, **Tel: 01772 494227**

**Membership Secretary** Janet Lane, 21 Elmhurst Road, Lytham St Annes, FY8 3JH

**Tel: 01253 725323, Email: [jclane1@btinternet.com](mailto:jclane1@btinternet.com)**

**NEWSLETTER CIRCULATION**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT YOUR newsletter can now be circulated by email.**

**Please email Janet Lane at [jclane1@btinternet.com](mailto:jclane1@btinternet.com)**

**Subscriptions**

Many thanks to all those Friends who have sent me cheques for the 2012 subscriptions. May I remind the rest of you who have hidden the reminder in a drawer or a file to deal with later to look this out and send off the cheque if you have not already done so.

The current subscription rates are £10 for an individual member and £12 for family membership.

This reminder does not apply, of course, to those of you who pay by Standing Order.

If any of you need to get in touch with me, my address, telephone number and email address are in the panel above.

**Janet Lane**