



# NEWSLETTER



## Reducing costs and increasing income

**Jacquie Crosby, Archives Service Manager**

I thought the Friends might appreciate a update on where we are with our savings targets.

### Staffing

The majority of the archive service budget is spent on staff salaries so, unfortunately, the only way to make significant savings is by reducing the number of staff. 8 people left our service on 31 March. They will not be replaced, and we are looking carefully how we can continue to deliver services with fewer staff.

It is inevitable that some things will take longer – document production and answering enquiries for example – and that other things will be quite different.

### Charges

Regular users will have noticed that our fees and charges increased on 1st April and will, I hope, generate more income and help to cover costs.

I will be developing an income generation strategy over the next few months which will include simple things such as encouraging more donations as well as partnerships with external organisations which can provide income or funding.

### Opening hours

I am very grateful to all of you who responded to the opening hours consultation in February. 62% respondents (*continued on page 2*)

## An all-round fantastic service

### From The Chair

During the past few months (actually, for over 35 years) I've been to many record offices and archive repositories around the country.

My tally is something like 40 offices and a dozen or so private archives – though the march of time means that some of the places I once used no longer exist, or are now shining new HLF funded archive palaces where their predecessors were grubby backrooms in county office buildings. (*continued on page 3*)



See page 2 for the bigger picture

**Easter Quarter 2016**

Charity Registration

Number 518611

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### FLA EVENTS

5 May 1.30—4.00  
Lancashire probate workshop with Anna Watson

9 July 1.00 pm Guided walk in Slaidburn

3 Sept 1.00 pm Visit to Parrox Hall

6 September AGM with talk by Diana Winterbotham 'What's in name'

2 December FLA Winter Treat: Dr Alan Crosby – 'Lancashire Christmas in the past'

## Reducing costs and increasing income

*Continued from page 1*

had visited Lancashire Archives during the last 6 months while 10% had never visited at all! There were 184 responses in total including 127 written comments, some of which provided very positive feedback on our service and the importance of providing a good quality archive service. 55% agreed with the proposed changes to opening hours and 45% disagreed.

Some people asked how closing for one day a week would save money. When we are open to the public, a number of people need to be in the searchroom: to allow access to the secure area, to answer enquiries, to produce documents from the strongrooms and to invigilate their use by researchers.

If we open for shorter time each day, and also close for one day a week, these same people can be diverted to essential behind-the-scenes tasks such as cleaning, packaging and numbering archives or answering emails, so that overall we can manage a reduction in the number of staff.

The suggested opening hours have been revised in the light of the consultation. We have listened to user views and the revised proposals will be taken to county councillor Marcus Johnstone for a decision in May.

If agreed they should be implemented in July so regular users should keep an eye on the website or News from the Archives.



May Day, 1950s, Christ Church School—the site where Lancashire Archives was later built.

## An all-round fantastic service

*Continued from page 1*

It's interesting, and sometimes exasperating, to see and be subjected to the different approaches to major issues such as security and the details of searchroom rules and regulations, document issuing procedures, charges and photography. Every record office is different and even now some of the ways of doing this or that or the other surely date back forty or fifty or sixty years – the phrase that “it's how we've always done it” is probably quite important in that respect. Once introduced, a rule is very hard to change. And mostly the rationale is not questioned. If the county archivist back in 1965 decided that was the way to do it, who are we, fifty years later to make changes?

For instance, some offices count out the documents, some allow a box of material as long as it's under scrutiny or supervision, but others are completely inflexible about “three at a time” even if they are single sheets of paper that take 5 seconds to look through. Some meticulously check every single sheet of paper, but others weigh them (Warwickshire is particularly obsessive about that – your document is put on electronic scales, weighed, a slip of paper is printed out, it's then attached to the document with a paperclip .... all immensely time-consuming and clumsy, and if you've ever seen anyone trying to weigh a large rolled plan on a small set of scales you'll know how mad the whole system can seem).

Other offices are eccentric about security – at one in the North East I was told that I couldn't take a pencil case into the searchroom in case I walked off with a document concealed within it. I was going to use a tithe map, and that would require a pretty large pencil case! But the same office didn't even bother to count out documents or sheets of paper.

Of course, I always compare everywhere else with how we do things here in Lancashire, and sometimes (hard though it is to believe) there's even a touch of the grumpy old man in my response to a local rule (“Well, that's not how it

works/is done at LANCASHIRE ARCHIVES”). But, as many of you will know, some record offices are simply not very welcoming – when you arrive, you feel intimidated or sense that you are really something of a nuisance. Some places are friendly and have helpful staff who explain and direct, but in others the staff seem to regard your presence as an irritation or, much worse, are chummy with “the regulars” but give the cold shoulder to the newly-arrived ignoramus.

I am biased, of course, because not only is the archive service run by Mrs Crosby, but also I've been working as a researcher in Lancashire Archives for three and a half decades. I'm accustomed to their ways! But despite that bias I can truthfully say that the ‘sense of arrival’ at Lancashire Archives is second to none ... it's light and bright and there are usually flowers on the counter. It's spacious and airy and the searchroom looks clean and uncluttered. Some places I visit (I name no names, being the soul of tact and discretion) are dark and dismal, the access is unclear and badly signed, the would-be warm welcome takes second place to the off-putting security.

The LA experience is fantastic. That's one of the things we love about Lancashire Archives (others include, of course, the documents – which are incomparable - and the sense of shared interest in the county's heritage, as well as the exciting range of activities and events which are held by the Archives and by the Friends of Lancashire Archives). I treasure these treasures – we need to support LA in all that they do, and to make sure that as best we can we fight for the future of Lancashire Archives. The Friends are trying hard to act as a champion of the service and all that it offers to the people of the county and beyond. We really value your support – so thanks for all that you've done so far, and for all that we'll do in the future.

**Alan Crosby, Chairman, FLA**

## Contact FLA

The Friends of Lancashire Archives can be contacted via our website [www.flarchives.co.uk](http://www.flarchives.co.uk)

You may direct letters to any committee member

via Lancashire Archives Bow Lane, Preston,  
Lancashire PR1 2RE 01772 533039

**Becoming an email subscriber** means FLA can use most of your subscription for good works.

If you would like to be added to the email list, please tell membership secretary Peter Bamford :  
[theflatreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:theflatreasurer@gmail.com)

## WANTED! FLA EVENTS ORGANISER

At the AGM in September, Zoë Lawson will step down as Events Organiser and the FLA Committee need a replacement.

This position is responsible for the fund-raising events of the FLA and involves contacting the speakers for talks, writing the publicity and designing the fliers, taking the bookings and organising the refreshments.

There are usually around six events a year to prepare. Knowledge of word processing and spreadsheets would be desirable. For further information please contact Zoë Lawson email [zoe.lawson@talktalk.net](mailto:zoe.lawson@talktalk.net)

## Membership Matters

**Peter Bamford**

**Membership Secretary**

We're growing! We've recruited 20 new members in the last 6 months; welcome to you all and thanks for joining us. Unfortunately 2 members have resigned and sadly 2 have died. Can you help us recruit even more members? If we all introduced one new member our membership would double! See what you can do.

On the downside we still have 14 members who have not yet renewed their subscriptions for 2016. Under our rules you will not be eligible to receive any future newsletters, so please pay as soon as possible. I'll be shortly be sending out final reminder emails or a letter enclosed with this newsletter if you still receive it by post.

If you decide not to renew I would appreciate an email (address below) so I may keep the register up to date.

Many thanks to you all for your continuing support.

**Email me at: [theflatreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:theflatreasurer@gmail.com)**

# The Hulton Archive: progress report

By Keri Nicholson, Archivist



Continuation of the project to catalogue the Hulton archive has allowed me to spend time working on more modern records, which included some deeply personal family stories.

Kittie Mitton's father James Jackson was farm manager and head woodsman to Sir William Hulton from 1908 to 1920 and she grew up on the Hulton Park estate.

Kittie describes the kindnesses offered by the Hulton family, including the time that Lady Hulton took her to see an eye specialist in Manchester, her first trip in a motor car. She also describes the annual Christmas party for estate employees and their families, at which her father as senior employee danced the first waltz with Lady Hulton while Sir William Hulton led her mother, and the Christmas tree was filled with presents which would be given out to the children.

Much of the Hulton family's wealth came from the coal found under their land. References to colliery work can be found throughout the estate papers, but there are a small number of items of particular interest. One of the account books within the archive included a number of papers relating to coal mining unions, with a membership card and an extremely moving

letter describing the hardships of life as a collier, where "they have to labour and that till their grace is almost melted their throat dried up and their strength exhausted but not only is their calling laborious but dangerous when their lives are in danger every moment".

First-hand accounts of this kind can be found throughout the First Report of the Commissioners on Mines, a copy of which is held within the collection.

We are also lucky to have a photograph of pit brow employees at a colliery site, believed to date from the late 19th century.



Probably the most moving papers in the collection relate to Geoffrey Hulton's service with the Royal Marines during the Second World War.

He was serving on board the HMS Repulse in 1941 when it was torpedoed by the Japanese, and the crew were forced to abandon the sinking ship.

After surviving the attack Geoffrey wrote an evocative letter to his family in which he describes his experiences, including the moment he had to leave the ship:

"One last look round – and it is impossible to explain all that means, to those who have never served in a ship and learned to love her as a human being. There was no time for regret, and with a sigh I took my leap, thick into the oil fuel

*Continued from page 5*

that was all over the surface of the water. Dear God! Is there anything more loathsome than that oil fuel, which killed so many of my friends?"

Sadly his situation would hardly improve after the rescue. Around 3 months later he would



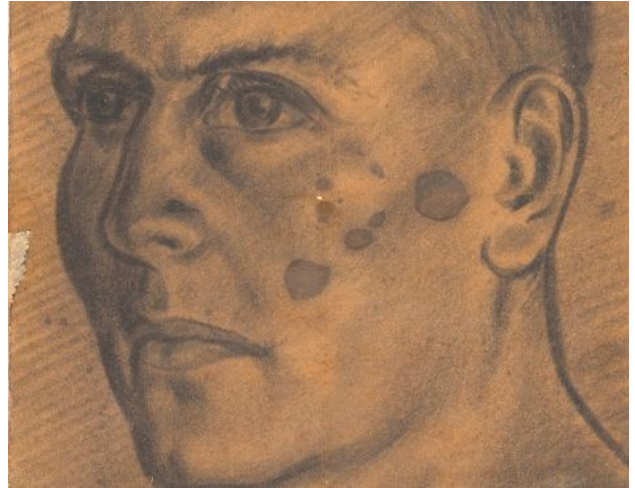
be captured by the Japanese in Singapore and taken to the notorious Changi prison camp as a POW.

He would spend the rest of the war as a prisoner, travelling to Thailand where he and his men would be involved in the building of the Burma Railway.

Geoffrey again chose to write down his experiences, in a manuscript entitled 'Those dreadful years':

"I am not going to go into gruesome details; each awful day gave way to the next, the food dwindled, and the Japanese continued to bully, as men died. In late October the main body, who had gone out to work on the railway, returned to the fold, and some of them were in a shocking state."

There are also comprehensive records relating to the management of the Hulton estate during the 19th and 20th centuries, with references to the development of new roads as well as major undertakings like the Belmont Reservoir and Thirlmere Aqueduct.



The estate records in this part of the collection include accounts, copy letter books and rentals as well as around 270 plans.

My final task, once all of the records had been examined and listed, was to come up with a suitable new arrangement.

The archive has now been split into four main sections, with the first containing an alphabetical listing by place of the deeds and other record types which provide evidence of title, largely adapted from the original catalogue.

The second section contains records relating to estate management, while the third section contains family and personal papers.

The final section contains miscellaneous papers which did not easily fit into the previous groups of records. These have been arranged thematically by subject, and contain everything from a printed portrait of John Bellingham, the assassin who killed British Prime Minister Spencer Perceval, to sales catalogues for sanitary appliances produced by Thomas Crapper and Co and Doulton and Co.

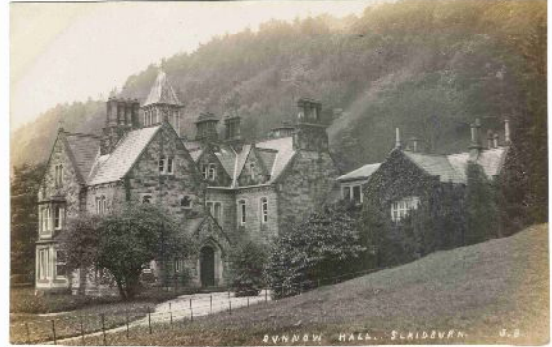
The new catalogue is now available to search online and in the searchroom, and will hopefully help to open up this important collection to a much wider audience.

## A Walk by the Mansions of Slaidburn, with Chris Spencer

**Saturday 9 July 2016, fee £10**

This will be a gentle stroll of about a couple of miles mainly on the flat (no hills or difficult terrain).

Walking through Slaidburn village and its array of 18th century cottages, surrounded by beautiful English countryside, we'll pass by the mansions of Town Head (an early Georgian mansion, recently renovated, with connections to Lawrence Sterne the novelist); Whiteholme (an 1850s Italianate-style villa designed by architects Austin and Paley of Lancaster); and Dunnow Hall (on the site of the Domesday vill of 'Battersby', and the Jacobean Battersby Hall, the present mansion dating mainly from the 1860s and which has a tragic history associated with its first owner).



Time permitting, we can then visit the Church with its array of 17th century (and later) box pews, 1630s bench pews, Georgian 3-decker pulpit and Jacobean chancel screen similar to that of St John's, Leeds. And, for those who wish to carry on, a walk up to Woodhouse Hall (a slight but gentle climb up Shay Lane) a 'mansion house' built in 1694 for William and Jane Smithson nee Leigh.

Please bring suitable walking footwear. The 'road' to Dunnow Hall is sometimes muddy if there has been recent rain. The walk will last about 3 hours, with stops along the way.

**Meet at the Car Park on Slaidburn Green at 1pm.**

## FLA visit to Parrox Hall

**Saturday 3 September 2016, fee £10**

The FLA is organising a visit to Parrox Hall, Preesall in the Wyre on Saturday 3 September. Parrox Hall is a Grade II listed building and one of the oldest houses in Lancashire, probably built in the early C17th.

The owners, the Elletson family have been in continuous occupation for 300 years and the present Squire is still the direct descendant of the original Lord of the Manor of Preesall-with-Hackensall, Geoffrey the Crossbowman (Galfridus Arbalastarius). He was a Norman soldier who was granted six carucates of land by Prince John in 1189. The hall is rarely open to the public but the FLA has managed to arrange a special viewing.



If you are interested in coming on this tour of the house, which also includes refreshments, fill out the booking form overleaf.

**Please meet at 2.00. There is parking near the hall, which is on Park Lane, Preesall, Poulton-le-Fylde FY6 0NW**

# Events Booking Forms

## Booking form for Mansions of Slaidburn.

Please complete and return to: Zoë Lawson, Roselea, Mill Lane, Goosnargh, Preston, PR3 2JX.  
Tel. 01772 865347 **or**, if paying by BACS email this form as an attachment to : zoe.lawson@talktalk.net

Name(s) .....

Address .....

Postcode .....

Telephone ..... Email.....

I enclose a cheque for \_\_\_\_\_ made out to *Friends of Lancashire Archives*

**Or**

I wish to pay by BACS. Please transfer funds to the following account:

Sort Code: 16-28-33 Account number 11771886. **Ensure you give your surname as reference.**

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## Booking form for Visit to Parrox Hall.

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