

# Bank Hall NEWS

Issue Number 61  
Spring 2024



FRIENDS OF  
**BANK HALL**  
BRETHERTON

## Past outdoor events

### February Snowdrop Days

The Bank Hall snowdrops can be relied on to put on a spectacular show and the 2024 season was no exception. These precious little flowers attracted a huge number of visitors and 'Bank Hall Snowdrop Days' are now becoming well established as one of the best in the North West. 1,880 visitors attended this year with 736 new visitors (not been before). Of course, an event like this could not go ahead without a dedicated team of volunteers to make sure everything went according to plan. This year the Friends were selling snowdrops which has helped in boosting funds that go towards Bank Hall projects.

Outdoor events are always at the mercy of the weather and persistent rain in January and February combined with the large number of visitors meant that the wood chip paths had become extremely muddy and slippery underfoot, so as a safety precaution the final Wednesday and Sunday of the snowdrop season were cancelled. However, with help from Friends of Lytham Hall the paths were soon repaired ready for the next event.

### Easter Bunny Hunt

Our very successful annual Easter event took place on Saturday 30th March. Children enjoyed the Bunny Hunt and Woodland Wildlife Trail and were rewarded with an Easter Egg at the end of the trail. People came dressed up to add to the fun of the event. Refreshments, Bric-a-brac stall (in aid of the Potting Shed Project) Merchandise Stall and pre booked Prospect Tower and Exhibition visits were all available on the day.



## The Walled Garden

April will see the start of planting up (to a plan) of the herbaceous borders in the Walled Garden. In addition we would welcome any hardy perennial plant donations from members, volunteers or trustees. If you find yourself with extras, please contact Sally at - [bankhallvolunteering@gmail.com](mailto:bankhallvolunteering@gmail.com) and she will arrange local collection.



## A Message from the Chairman

Spring has sprung and the snowdrops have been fantastic yet again, but the carpets have now retreated and it is the daffodils and primroses that are taking their turn. This will be followed with bluebells and hopefully by the walled garden borders in the summer, which are currently being prepared for planting. The grounds team will continue with clearing the areas that have become overgrown. Events are being planned for the rest of the year and we have had some fantastic talks in the tower with more yet to come!

On 22nd March, there was a great surprise as a peacock suddenly appeared in the grounds. This is viewed by some as a symbol of good luck; it is unknown where he has come from, but he seems to have settled and we do hope he will stay! The peacock is the emblem of the Banastre Family who built the first part of the house on site and even had a fireplace over mantle featuring a peacock in one of the bedrooms. Two peacocks also feature on the Twycross drawing of Bank Hall from 1846. So if you visit us, keep a look out for him!

*John Howard*

## Upcoming outdoor events

### Garden Event - Sunday 19th May

This new event will take place in the walled garden where our team are currently working on creating new heritage and herbaceous borders. We will also be showcasing a new bed celebrating the winner of the Primary School Year 6, Design Challenge. There will also be Flower and Plant Stalls and Botanical Demonstrations. The Event runs from 12pm to 4pm (last admission at 3:30pm). Dogs will be welcome at this event



### Treasure Hunt - Sunday 23 June

This event will take place in the grounds and walled garden where children (and adults) will search for the treasure in the grounds and then bring their completed answer sheets to the walled garden where they will receive their very own piece of treasure! There is a pirate theme this year so any pirate costumes will be encouraged. The Event runs from 12pm to 4pm (last admission at 3:30pm).



## Past Tower Talks

23 February

### Anne Johnson - Snowdrops

The first of our gardening talks took place in the Banastre room of the Prospect Tower, and what a way to start them off with a Snowdrop Talk by Anne Johnson. Anne has looked after the Bank Hall snowdrops for over 20 years and has co-written the book 'The Snowdrop Collection of Bank Hall Bretherton'.



14 March

### Richard Hodson - Small flowering Clematis for the summer garden

The guest speaker, Richard Hodson is a local clematis specialist and grower who also holds three national collections of clematis.



23 March

### John Dixon - Hardy Plants

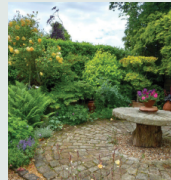
John Dixon introduced the work of the Hardy Plant Society. This included sharing its charitable and conservation work, membership benefits and promotion of its popular 'hardy plants'. Experienced and new gardeners came along to explore these popular species and their uses in the garden.

## Upcoming Tower Talks

Friday 26 April at 1pm

### Jacqueline Iddon - 'Iddon Treasures'

Jacqueline Iddon is a well known local plant specialist who runs her Hardy Plant business in Bretherton. Jacqueline's illustrated 90 minute talk will feature the wide variety of plants that she grows in her garden, including how the garden was designed and developed. This will be followed by 'gardeners question time' and plants she has for sale.



Tuesday 21 May at 2pm

### Sue Bodill - 'Could you dress Tudor?'

All about Tudor clothing



19 June at 2pm

### Pete Bullen

#### 'Bonsai, what's it all about?'

**Tickets for the Tower Talks** are £8 each and can be booked at: <https://buyticketsattheheritagetrustforthenorthwest/1186182>

Refreshments are included in the ticket price.

## Gordon Johnson

We are very sad to report that Gordon Johnson sadly passed away on the 1st January 2024. Gordon was a very important player in the campaign to save Bank Hall and was well known and respected in Bretherton. It was through Gordon that the Bank Hall Action Group was formed in July 1995 and the first meetings were held in Croston. Gordon was also the first Chairman of the Bank Hall Action Group (now the Friends of Bank Hall).

Without Gordon's determination and love for the building and its grounds, it is quite possible the campaign to save Bank Hall might never have happened. Gordon identified the struggles that met the group, stood his ground and led the campaigners to overcome the barriers in saving the derelict ruin.

It was the desire of his friends in the group that Gordon should visit the restored Bank Hall, but sadly ill health prevented this.

On behalf of the Friends of Bank Hall, we would like to express our appreciation of Gordons work and send our sympathy to his wife Margo, his daughter Debbie and family.



Gordon is pictured on the left with the mayor of Chorley and other members of the Bank Hall Action Group

## New Chief Executive Officer at Heritage Trust for the North West



Heritage Trust for the North West has appointed Michael Guy as its new Chief Executive. He takes over from Liz Moss who has moved to 'Showtown' Museum in Blackpool.

Michael has held key roles in national heritage organisations for the last decade and has worked in the fields of law and regeneration with a particular focus on grant funding. He brings a wealth of experience to the Trust gleaned from his time at English Heritage, National Lottery Heritage Fund, North West Regeneration Agency and Homes England. Michael said - "I am delighted to be joining a fantastic organisation which protects, preserves and promotes amazing heritage across the region. We have an excellent team, a fantastic group of volunteers and loyal audiences. I am really positive about the future and look forward to continuing our excellent existing activities as well as pursuing new projects."

## The stair gates return



We have had the tower stair gates returned to the Hall and also two newel posts. David Parfitt from HTNW will be coming (on a date to be confirmed) to fit them to the wall of the tower above their original location to form part of the exhibition.

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Friends of Bank Hall (Registered Charity 1147592)  
(FoBH is associated with Bank Hall Action Group & Heritage Trust for the North West)

