



Chairman's Report

2007 a New Year and this will be the 12th year of our campaign to save Bank Hall a grade 2 * listed building. As chairman of the action group I am constantly asked by members of the public for an update on the progress to restore Bank Hall. The road to restoration is a difficult one to tread it takes stamina and persistence and not giving up on your goal. This is my effort to tell you our news; however the scope of this newsletter cannot reflect truly all the hard work that takes place behind the scenes

On your visit to the hall today you may be seeing the building for the first time and you may feel amazed at the beauty of the building even in its current state of dereliction. You may think the task is hopeless. We hope you will support us in our campaign.

Currently the building looks very sad. The slates have been removed and additional scaffolding erected on the northern side of the building. These are two important phases of work to reduce any further deterioration. Removing the slates will help prevent rainwater being channelled into the building and hopefully at the same time conserve the slates in order that they may be re introduced when building work commences. Bank Hall Action Group with generous support from the public has made a significant contribution to these works, £10,000 has been added to monies from the Heritage Lottery Fund Stage 1 grant, and stabilisation works to the building being part of the requirements of this phase.

You will also notice that we are currently without a visitor centre. Sadly a fire broke out from an adjacent part of the building in which the visitor centre is located. This caused damage to some of our merchandise and some artefacts. Efforts are being made to salvage these items. The Heritage Trust for the North West have kindly agreed to store these artefacts on our behalf and to conserve them until such time that they can be displayed in the public areas of the restored hall. The Heritage Lottery Fund for the North West have suggested that an application is submitted for a grant to re instate the visitor centre, the phoenix will rise from the ashes so watch this space.

This winter the University of Central Lancashire Archaeology Department has nominated Bank Hall Action Group for the Queens' Award for Volunteer Services. We await the outcome of this having passed the first part of the selection process.

Today as you visit the hall you will see that trees have been cleared to the south east of the building revealing some of the more important specimen trees previously hidden from view by the 1970's plantation. One of our members applied and was successful in securing a grant to fell 500 trees and

under the guidance of the forestry commission and this has duly happened. As a result the wood bark paths you will walk on have been created from the branches of the trees. The larger trunks will be cut up eventually and logs can be purchased by the public.

Behind the scenes there are endless meetings as the requirements of the Heritage Lottery Fund and Planning consent issues are addressed. This scheme is the most special, complicated and high profile that the HLF in the North West are dealing with. It is just possible that further HLF monies may be available for our project. The outcome of this will be known by mid March. After this information is available our development partner Urban Splash will be ready to submit a planning application to Chorley Borough Council. We look therefore to the end of April for the submission of a planning application.

As far as the public access is concerned I can say with confidence that the plans for the building are exciting, there will be ample space in the hall for people to visit and see displays that will illustrate the history of the building and the history of our campaign, which is a story in itself. The prospect tower will be open to the public and hopefully we will still have the means to provide you with refreshments.

The grounds of Bank Hall continue to be used by the University Of Central Lancashire; you will see the trenches dug by the Archaeologists and the study area for the earthworm research project as you walk around the grounds. During the month of February students from the Forensic Science department will once again be working on scene of the crime activities within the grounds.

Today you will see the beautiful snowdrops, which have brought us national recognition. Visit us again this year and you will see a changing canvas at the hall that never fails to provide enjoyment.

Finally I wish to say that none of this would be possible without the support of the Lilford Trust and the Heritage Trust for the Northwest. I am very grateful particularly to the estate for allowing us temporary access to Bank Hall Farm following the fire in our visitor centre.

If you want to know more visit our website at www.bankhall.org.uk or contact Janet Edwards 01772 613334.

Janet Edwards
Chairman



The Million Pennies Appeal is nearing the £1000 mark a great milestone so keep collecting!!!



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