



LANCASTRIANS IN LONDON

Patron: His Majesty THE KING, Duke of Lancaster
President: Rt. Hon. Alistair Burt

NEWSLETTER - No. 174 Autumn 2025

Lancastriansinlondon.uk

Events 2025 / 26

Thursday 18 December - Savoy Chapel Carol Service & Athenaeum Club Christmas Dinner.

Monday 12 January 2026 - AGM. Union Jack Club.

Monday 23rd March 2026 - Westminster Walk.

Friday 17 April 2026 Annual Dinner. Lincoln's Inn.

HMS Lancaster



Six ships of The Royal Navy have been named HMS Lancaster since 1694 and the Association of Lancastrians in London have been an affiliate of the last three, a relationship lasting over a hundred years.

The sixth HMS Lancaster is to be the last and her most recent tour of duty in the Middle East has come to an end. In June Sam Stephens, commanding officer of the Port crew, told us that Royal Navy families will welcome the ship back to Plymouth and then port visits around the UK in October were planned. These will be opportunities for the ship to engage with their affiliates and members of the public prior to a formal decommissioning ceremony in November, again in His Majesty's Naval Base Devonport, Plymouth.

At the time of this newsletter's publication, no further detail has been provided but If there is an opportunity for members to join in the ceremonies mentioned, advice will be sent to all those on our email list.



London Underground strikes prevented our Westminster walk in September so a new date is advertised above. The next newsletter will have an application form attached. Four days later Tube problems had cleared, allowing our annual quiz to proceed at Doggett's again. I'm pleased to say that the highest scoring round was the newsletter questions so keep reading and join us for more fun next year. Alistair Burt's thinking cap, below, didn't beat the winning team, bottom picture.





Blackpool Lights 2025

The last weekend in August saw popstar Oli Murs switch on the famous illuminations. This Lancashire town was first lit up by twinkling bulbs 146 years ago - twelve months before Thomas Edison patented the electric lightbulb. The words below are largely extracted from an article by:

Hannah Al-Othman
North of England correspondent
26 August 2025 **The Guardian**

Blackpool lights this year have a Lancashire/London connection through the event's creative curator Lawrence Llewellyn-Bowen (Welsh father but born in Westminster, 1965). He has been involved with 'The Lights' now for 20 years and has become one of Blackpool's fiercest advocates having been taken by the town on his first visit on a wet November afternoon in the 1980's. "I just didn't know that somewhere like this existed in the United Kingdom, somewhere where everywhere you looked there was so much design", he said. Having grown up in London Llewellyn-Bowen said he himself was a latecomer. "I have no vesigial nostalgia for Blackpool, it was never part of my childhood experience at all. However, it very quickly became part of my children's childhood and a big thing now is that my grandchildren are obsessed by this whole thing."



Llewellyn-Bowen went on to say "While the illuminations had formed core memories for generations of children in the north-west, their appeal had not spread widely beyond the Midlands. "it's a bit of a north-south divide. You get to a point where suddenly you just say 'Blackpool' and everyone starts getting misty-eyed, and that carries on as far north you can go because it's always been incredibly popular with the Scots aswell. I always feel rather sorry for the poor mealy-mouthed, magnolia- shaded Farrow and Ball-obsessed south because they never really will get that, they will be kind of quite Brighton-centric because somehow it's cool, but actually, there's nothing cooler than Blackpool, and nothing naughtier as well. "



The Gazette

News you can trust since 1873

By Sean Gleaves
Published 29th Aug 2025

Blackpool's heart really did skip a beat tonight as pop singer Olly Murs pulled the famous switch to launch the 2025 Illuminations season. The free Switch-On event once again cemented its reputation as one of the highlights of the UK's entertainment calendar with free ticket holders packing the Tower Festival Headland arena and thousands more watching from the promenade's live screening zone near Central Pier. The 24,000-strong crowd were all successful entrants from a highly competitive ballot which received over 150,000 ticket requests.

Olly entertained fans of all ages before flicking the switch to trigger the world-famous light show. As a million lights lit up the six-mile display, a burst of fireworks exploded above the Blackpool Tower. Moments before pulling the switch, Olly told the audience; "For me, from Essex, it's an honour to be in Blackpool tonight, it's such a great place, this is a real part of British culture."

Olly is now the 82nd luminary to trip the lights fantastic, joining a prestigious line-up of stars who have had the honour of switching on the Illuminations, including Ken Dodd, Tim Burton, Robbie Williams and Shirley Ballas.

The Switch-On event precedes the start of the Illuminations season, which has been drawing in millions of visitors each year since 1879. Blackpool Illuminations will now be shining every night until January 4.

If you have memories from The Lancastrians trips to Blackpool I'd love to hear from you.



Eden Project Morecambe



Mary Ward House
Voysey Room

A good turnout from the Lancastrians in Euston on 30th September to hear the exciting progress that the project team have made in Morecambe. £50m of government money has almost been matched by private and commercial contributions, currently there is £2m more to find before the target is reached. Completion of the site is anticipated in 2029 with the first visitors expected in 2028 and then half a million visitors a year when the attraction is fully functioning. The site will employ 350 staff and the wider area is expected to benefit by the additional generation of around 4000 jobs.

Project Director John Pye, below, points to the layout of the site which embodies the two central areas to be known as the Realm of the Moon and the Realm of the Sun. John joined the project in March after nine years at the RHS where he led the new garden creation in the grounds of Worsley New Hall in Salford.



An enthusiastic audience asked some challenging questions led by former president and sometime resident of Morecambe, Jonny Ball, who wanted to know if the salt corrosion suffered by generations there had been taken into account. What about the lack of hotel accommodation? How high was the site above the adjacent sea level? Had public transport and parking been adequately studied?

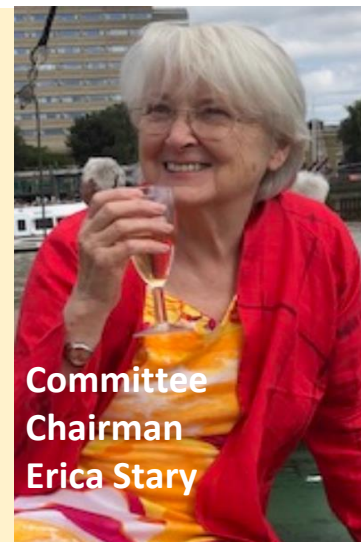
All these questions were answered by the data collected from numerous studies in which the project has already invested. Salt-hardy flora and fauna are to be present, the site is four minutes walk from Morecambe station and the Winter Gardens is undergoing development supported by the local council with visitor numbers considered.

We are grateful to the Eden Project Morecambe for bringing this presentation to us in London and for providing the drinks and canapés that we supported and enjoyed throughout the evening. We are now advocates of the project so, please, spread the word and support it!

More information is available online visit the website edenproject.com and click on 'New Edens'.

During our first Committee meeting in January this year Erica Stary volunteered to take over the role of Chair from William Arnold who has served us well in the role for four years and will still be the Association's Treasurer. This is Erica's Lancashire story.

I was born in Burnley during WW2 in the parental home near Scott Park, Burnley – about 50 yards away from where my father had been born some 35 years earlier. My mother's family lived first in Barcroft (in Cliviger) then in Brunshaw fairly close to Turf Moor the local football stadium at the bottom of the town (Burnley being in a classic Pennine valley). Due to Mother's illness (she died just after my 4th birthday) I was sent aged 3 to a local school where I thrived, then at 9 to a boarding school in Yorkshire chosen by mother, but de-schooled at 16 on the grounds that "education is wasted on a girl, you'll get married". Seething, I was sent to Burnley Tech to learn typing and shorthand.



Committee
Chairman
Erica Stary

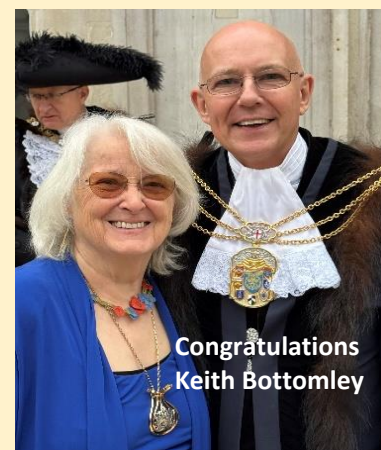
I then discovered I could be a lawyer on my O'Levels doing 5 years articles (apprenticeship) which the parents reluctantly organised, and I studied in the evenings after work via correspondence course. Since qualifying in 1965, I've probably done all one can do in the law: teaching and examining for various professional exams; editing a tax journal; writing books and articles on tax; lecturing at conferences; sitting on the boards of two tax bodies and being president of one; working both in the City as a tax lawyer and in the Revenue. I escaped tax when I was lured onto the Bench where I worked in the county and crown courts mainly in London and was retired (compulsorily) at 70, the then maximum age. Since then, I've been pretty heavily involved in the City's guilds and liveries.

On the personal front, I married Michael and we had 42+ glorious years together before he sadly died of an industrial disease in 2012. Later, in 2016 I became close to John, who won the Jaffa cakes case back in the early 90s and, like me, widowed after a long marriage. He alas died last year. Michael and I have one daughter, Philippa, who married a fabulous husband, Raed, born in Beirut. They live in the city.

Socially, I've enjoyed travelling to non-tourist destinations such as Tibet, Bhutan and Falklands. I've also cycled in many countries, sometimes with daughter, raising funds for charity, usually for women's cancer or mothers and babies. All those years of cycling up and down Manchester Road (A56) to and from town and home have stood me in good stead! I am also involved with a pressure group seeking equality in the granting of heraldic arms. I currently live in our old matrimonial home in Weybridge (chosen by himself in 1957 as it was "close to Twickenham"). Finally, if pressed as to where my loyalties lie beyond saying I'm British/European, I will say I am Lancastrian – especially if talking to those from over the border to the east!



Erica mentions above, her heavy involvement with the City Guilds and Liveries. Among other things she is Past Master of three different companies. In September Erica joined Lancastrian's member Keith Bottomley as he was sworn in as Lay Sherrif of the City. This honour comes with a shrieval badge that is personal to the wearer. The triple chain signifies the office of Sheriff of the City of London, and the elements of the badge hold significance to Keith in his life and career and as a liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Wheelwrights.



Congratulations
Keith Bottomley

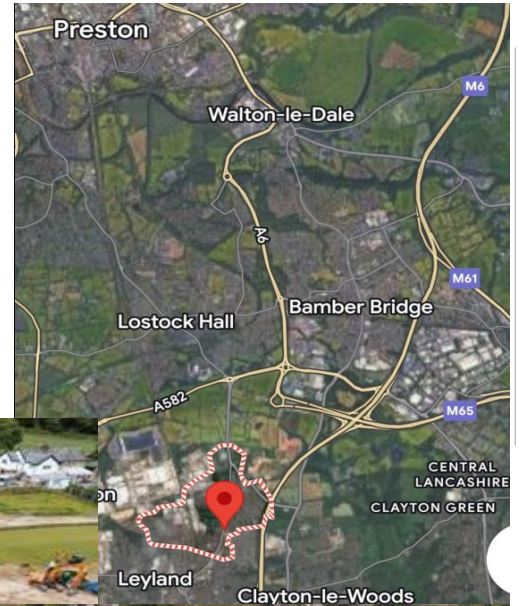
The central shield background enamel is "Preston City" blue, there are elements of the Bank of England bronze doors and crossed keys for security within a ring of chain links for strength and continuity. There is a discreet NatWest logo and an open book for education and learning, also the wings of Hermes, the messenger of the gods, for a career in communications. Space here prevents a full description of all the elements but of most interest to us is where the chains rise to the shoulder pieces of the Lancashire red rose.

Great things are happening at Lancashire Cricket Club



The Old Trafford Cricket Ground was established in 1857 as the home of the Manchester Cricket Club and later became the home of Lancashire County Cricket Club in 1864. It hosted its first Test match in 1884. The club's history includes additional 'home' grounds such as Stanley Park in Blackpool, Birkdale in Southport and Aigburth in Liverpool.

Around two years ago a project commenced in collaboration with Lancashire County Council to create a North-West Centre of Excellence for women's cricket and it is on-track to open in 2026. The new development illustrated below, is in Farington, Leyland. (Identified on the map.) This will be Lancashire Cricket Club's second home and it features two international-sized ovals, indoor facilities, and practice nets. It will host various levels of cricket, from first and second XI to schoolboy and schoolgirl teams, and also, potentially, provide a base for the disabled game.



Recently, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport gave £1.5 million to the England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) to build two indoor domes, one will be in Luton and the other will be included in the Farington development.

Pictured above, the minister responsible, Wigan MP Lisa Nandy, visited Farington on Monday 26th August to make the funding announcement. The domes will provide all-year-round, all-weather practice facilities in a covered environment at an affordable price for users. They were designed by the ECB in collaboration with Total-play, a cricket facilities specialist.



Farington's dome is due to open next year and will provide easy access for hard to reach social groups. If more funding is secured, the ECB would seek to build domes in cities staging games at the Cricket World Cup next year in five major cities including Manchester and London.



New Lancastrians Members



Southport-born Tommy Fleetwood recently won Golf's Tour Championship title, his first honour at the top level after 164 tournaments without success. One of the game's most popular players he cheered-up more than Lancastrians and Brits when he was part of the Europe Ryder Cup team that beat The USA on their home soil at the end of September.

Julie Ormerod, Audiologist from Fleetwood.
John Schofield, Professor, Consultant Histopathologist. Attended Manchester Grammar.
Jane Platt, Non Exec Director, financial services. Born in Liverpool.
David Lane, Retired Actuary with Lancashire parentage and a keen supporter of Lancashire County Cricket Club.
Andrew Jowett, Charity Executive, Grew up in Bolton/Horwich.
John Dewhurst, Born in Colne, Master Tax adviser.



Lincoln's Inn

By the next edition of this newsletter, 2026 will be upon us so please make sure you have this event in your new diary. Hosted by Lady Mary Arden, the guest speaker will be Dame Karen Pierce, former British Ambassador to the USA.

Sarah Wearden, daughter of member Pauline Wearden wrote to Jenny Murray, previous magazine editor, recently: *You won't have heard from Mum for a few years. Very sadly her beloved home in Highgate was closed after lockdown. Mum moved to Oxford to be closer to my sister and I, but she never recovered from the shock of leaving Highgate after 50 years, without saying goodbye to her community. She had amazing care in her home though and we have some good memories to draw on from this time including her 90th birthday party with over thirty members of her family. Mum died very peacefully on June 10th, at her care home in Oxfordshire. Dad would have been 105 this August and I know their friendships made through the Lancastrians meant a lot to them.*

An obituary for Dr Alan Hayes CBE appeared in the Times on 20th September. Alan was the president of the Lancastrians in London in 2005.

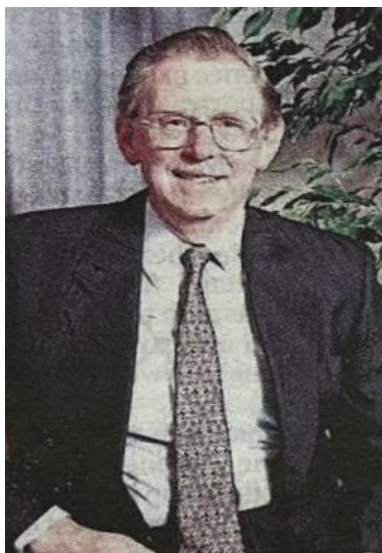
THE TIMES

Dr Alan Hayes, 95



Alan Hayes retired from ICI as the Chairman of Agrochemical & Seeds Business, having been with ICI since 1945. In 1991 when he was a fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry, President of the Society of Chemical Industry and Chairman of the British Overseas Trade Board European Exports Committee, he was appointed CBE.

Born in Cheatham Hill, Manchester, in 1930 he gained a PhD in chemistry from Christ College Cambridge under the tutelage of Nobel prize winning biochemist Professor (later Lord) Todd. Alan's father, Ernest, was a corner-shop butcher and his mother, Annie, had worked in the cotton mills. Alan met his wife Audrey at ICI and they married on Boxing Day in 1955, the only day that Ernest would shut the shop. Some of you may remember Audrey but, sadly, she died in 2010 just five years after Alan had been the president of our Association. I have a full copy of the obituary if anyone would like to see it in full, contact details given below.



To get in touch with Jim Collier, Newsletter editor, use email: j.collier@ntlworld.com or go to the Lancastrians in London website; lancastriansinlondon.uk