



# Lymm Heritage Centre Volunteer Handbook



## Welcome to the Lymm Heritage Centre

If you're reading this, it means you are now part of a new and exciting project in Lymm. You will be helping share Lymm's history with hundreds of people who are either visiting the wonderful village, or are residents wanting to learn more about where they live.

You're part of a team of dedicated volunteers who have turned an idea of housing a small collection of artefacts, to funding, building and opening a brand new Heritage Centre in the middle of the village to tell Lymm's story.

We've already had a fantastic couple of years getting to this point. Now with your help we hope to continue with our successes and become a recognised and trusted establishment in Lymm, Warrington and beyond!

Thank you for joining us as we build something special in Lymm.

# Alan Williams

Alan Williams  
Chair, Lymm Heritage Centre



## Lymm

Lymm appears as "Limme" in the Domesday Book.

It is really from the mid 18th century that Lymm as a settlement really "takes off". There are some older buildings still standing, mainly farms or worker's cottages and of course the remains of the slitting mill in Slitten gorge. However in the 1760s the extension of the Bridgewater Canal dig arrived in Lymm which was to change the village for ever. It is from this time on, with the birth of the Transport and Industrial Revolutions, that three heritage themes emerge.

### TRADES

Including Fustian cutting, goldbeating, salt-works,

### TRANSPORT

The Bridgewater Canal, the turnpike road that also created Lymm Dam, the railway, the Manchester Ship Canal, The motorway and Thelwall viaduct, The Trans-pennine trail

### TRADITIONS

Rushbearing, May Queen (originally the Band of Hope Festival), Morris Dancing and in modern times the Duck Race, Dickensian and Lymm Festival to name but a few.

And of course there are the **PEOPLE** of Lymm; each with their own story some of which we hope to tell.

## **Procedures & Standards**

You will be introduced to the appropriate way of carrying out the tasks as part of your volunteering role and to general standards for the use of the Heritage Centre.

We ask that all volunteers take a common sense approach to their volunteering role at the Heritage Centre and ask that they do not put themselves or others in danger. We will be developing a series of policies on key issues during the early weeks and months of operation. If you have experience in this area we would welcome your participation

We also invite volunteers to make suggestions or amendments that they would like to see in the file.

## **Health and Safety Tips**

### **Fire**

All volunteers must be familiar with use of extinguishers and also when not to use them but to evacuate the building and telephone for help. Please do not put yourself in any danger when tackling a fire and immediately call 999 for assistance.

### **First Aid**

The first aid box will be in the kitchen and is for personal volunteer use only. Do not use it on any members of the public as this may incur legal responsibility, but offer its use only.

### **VDUs**

If working on the PC, please take regular breaks.

### **Storeroom**

Please be careful when entering the storeroom by yourself. Handle heavy objects with great care. Check area is clear before moving stacks.

### **Contact with the Public**

In the event of violent or threatening behaviour – WALK AWAY and seek help. If you feel in any way threatened there is a panic alarm which is kept ??????. Be aware where it is kept and keep it on your person if you prefer.

### **Lone Working**

If you are working at the Resource centre by yourself we recommend that you let someone you know aware that you are working at the Centre and what time you are expected to finish. We will always plan to have at least two people on duty when we are open to the public

## **Opening Up**

If you are opening the Centre, please arrive a few minutes before the advertised opening time so that you can run through the opening up procedure before guests may arrive. Please don't attempt this by yourself on the first time, buddy up with someone who has opened up before so it will run as smoothly as possible.

- Unlock, come in.
- Unlock back-office only as needed (same set of keys).
- A bit cold. We are able to programme the central heating for every day of the week so even if you come after the centre has been empty for three days it should still be warmed. If you need to over-ride the programme, which should be the exception you will find instructions next to the boiler.
- Check the toilets and make sure there is enough toilet paper.
- Start up any relevant IT equipment e.g. main flat panel.
- Sign in on Log Book.
- If required, open the roof windows by using the electrical panel. For ventilation you feel the need to open the roof windows (typically only in exceptionally warm weather conditions) press the bottom right to activate the controller then the symbol on the right to start the open. Press the bar in the centre to STOP further opening. The controller governs all the windows. You cannot open them individually. Beware of opening them too widely, if at all, if there is any expectation of rain. They are very slow to close and could therefore let in moisture.
- Put the OPEN sign up in the window.
- We have an A board. ( We will certainly buy at least one more). Please place it in a safe place on the pavement just near the bottom entrance to the community centre. Do not leave the centre unlocked while you do it if there not another team member inside. Do not put the A board if you think there is a risk it will get blown over. Please put on a Name Badge, As well as identifying you by name it will ensure people know your part of the centre team and not just another visitor.

## Working with visitors

We are very keen to understand who and how many people are visiting us, at what time and how they found out about us. We can do this partly by encouraging people to complete our guest book but not everyone will want to do this so we would like to keep a separate log of numbers, as shown to the right. Initially this will also help us

**LYMM HERITAGE CENTRE DAILY LOG SHEET**

Date  Retail total

Volunteer Register	Signature	Time In	Time Out
Name			

**Weather/ Special Circumstances**  
It is useful when looking back at visitor numbers to relate it to weather or anything else unusual like a village event, e.g. a Sunday Market.

**Visitor Numbers Log**  
You might want use the five barred gate method to count. Do not include people who are calling purely on business e.g. Leaflet distribution company, Meter readers, other members of centre team.

TIME	Adults	Children	Total
1pm-2pm			
2pm-3pm			
3pm-4pm			
4pm-5pm			
Other times			
TOTAL			
Toilet Only			

**Comment/ Actions/ Follow Up Needed**  
Continue overleaf if needed

establish whether our opening hours are appropriate e.g. is our last hour as busy as our first hour.

Please encourage visitors to sign the visitor book. We would especially like four things.

- Their post code
- Their email address and if they are willing to be added to our mailing list
- How they found out about us.
- Their comments, compliments are always nice but constructive suggestions and ideas are welcome too.

### **Approaching visitors**

Always a delicate balance! On the whole people don't like to feel crowded but at the same time it is good to welcome people into the centre and start some sort of conversation. Some people will come with a specific question or will be clearly keen to enter into conversation. Others prefer to be left to browse. If people have a specific local history question that you can't answer, ask them to put it in the visitor book with a big star and some-one will follow up with them. Enthusiastic and knowledgeable volunteers add to the quality of a visit – so always share a smile with visitors, keep up to date with the exhibition and help in any way you can.

### **Money Donations/ Membership (Centre Friends scheme)**

There is no admission price to the centre and we want to keep it that way. But, there are significant costs to opening a building in the middle of the village.

Therefore, if someone comes to the door and asks: "Is it free?", please answer along the lines of: "Absolutely! Do come in and look around." Once they have had chance to take a look then maybe follow up with something like "If you like what you see, then donations are welcome. The centre relies on them."

We will place the donation box prominently with a suitable message. The best donation of all is a friends' subscription but it won't be appropriate to promote that with every visitor.

### **Item / Artefact donations**

It is extremely important that you read the Artefacts donation policy **before** you accept any physical donation. Regardless of whether it is a photograph, small item, large collectable – the Artefact Donation policy must be adhered to.

If it would appear that we cannot accept an item, please approach this sensitively with the person who is offering it as they may be upset we haven't accepted it. Unfortunately, we do not have a large storage space and cannot have everything on

display at once. What we will almost certainly be able to do at least is arrange to photograph and perhaps get the background story.

## **Children**

We will be trying to cater for them specifically. Some of the exhibitions will carry kids' sections or quiz questions on the storyboards., colouring and activity table,

There will also be child oriented trails around the village.

The nature of our centre means that for routine opening for public visitors our centre staff volunteers should not need DBS clearance but do apply common sense to ensure you do not risk finding yourself in a compromising or risk situation. For example, do not offer to look after children while parents “pop to the shop”.

## **Food & Drink**

### **Visitors**

We really would prefer visitors not to come in with food or drink. That is very common these days and visitor should not be offended if we ask them not to come in with food or drink

### **Staff**

You are welcome to consume drinks and food in the back-office area but please do not bring either into the main exhibition area. This includes bringing hot drinks from the kitchen. There is a particular issue around pushing through the heavy fire-door hold open hot drinks. We will provide a closable jug for carrying boiling water through. Thanks ! **Retail Procedures**

The Heritage Centre may be the first or last part of a longer visit to the village. Don't forget to introduce any takeaway materials that people can use to explore the village in more depth with flyers, walk booklets and kids quizzes.

We will also have items people can purchase from us to help with the running of the Centre. Books such as: The Wheels and the Water, Hannah and the Ruby Glass are very popular. Also, people can purchase: Cotton Tote bags, Pictures, the Ann Turner Print and cards etc. We have also offered the History Society the opportunity to promote their extensive set of booklets and in time we may develop a wider range of gifts and other locally based items. Your ideas and suggestions are welcome.

There will be a daily reconciliation sheet with a list of merchandise for any sales made. Any items sold must be accounted for on this sheet, which will be changed daily. All money must be kept in a locked cash tin and out of sight.

## **Visitor Departure**

Always nice to thank people for coming in. Ask them if they mind completing the guest book as it helps us.

Before people leave encourage them to take something away with them. At the moment we have

- The Summer 2017 newsletter.
- The Becoming a Friend flyer
- The LYMM NEWS 1891 which contains details of how to become a volunteer on the inside.

Remember that as well as taking one for their own benefit., they may like to take one or two for friends or perhaps they even belong to a club or other establishment where they could display a small stock of them .

## Knowing the exhibition and Lymm's heritage

For every exhibition that we run we will hold initial tours for volunteers that will be led by whoever is curating or most knowledgeable about that exhibition. On these volunteer tours we will give some background information as well as drawing attention to specific artefacts or stories that may be of special interest to visitors. The aim of these tours will be to enable our centre staff to better answer questions for the general public but also to potentially “add value” for the visitors by bringing to life some of the exhibits/stories attached to them.

When time allows we will also develop “crib-sheets” , which will have extra information about each exhibition on them. These are not to be given out to visitors, but used for your own benefit to learn more about specific topics.

## IT

We aim to make our website a key source of information. It already contains, maps, flipbooks, videos, images, stories, a timeline, links to other sites etc. As we start to build our digital archive, that too will be on our website. Please do take some time to familiarise yourself with the website, how it is structured and how to navigate it.

If you have suggestions for additions to it or If you would like to be involved in its development please let Alan Williams know: [alanlymm@gmail.com](mailto:alanlymm@gmail.com).

The flat panel will be fully linked to the internet so there is no limit to the information you can access – including our website - but there may also be other specific collections or presentations on there. Everything will be accessible via touch sensitive menu and you will receive training in its use. If you have any queries or questions just ask! There will be training sessions for volunteers on using the flat panel – everything from basic operation to navigation and getting the most value of it. The aim is to make it so simple to use that even a casual visitor to the centre will be able to use it to navigate and explore heritage topics.

NB when we first open the IT will not be available ans we are still evaluating the most appropriate hardware to purchase.



## Providing local information

Providing what might be loosely described as “tourist information” is not one of our key objectives and is outside the terms of our charitable status. For that reason, we cannot, and do not, advertise ourselves as an Information Centre. Nevertheless, it is inevitable that visitors will come in with questions and looking for information. What we will offer is the same kind of services that you might see at a cinema, hotel, museum or other venue i.e. an information display which is stocked by a professional company on a regular basis. We do not pay for this service.

NB This will start up soon after opening

In addition to that we may have more local information, posters for upcoming events and activities in the village. If members of the public bring in material asking us to display it or give it out, do accept it but without committing that we will be able to do anything with it. Make a note on the daily log and leave it with the log.

### “Toilet only” users

It is a frequent request at the community centre. If it brings people over the threshold they may then stay and look at the exhibition. It’ll be great if they then went on and donated too!

## Closing Up

- Make sure the kitchen is clear and clean
- Shutdown any IT equipment as relevant
- Sign out on log book
- Follow cash procedure – which will be kept in the money tin to follow.
- Lock the Back Office Room.
- Check lights off in kitchens/toilets/both store rooms
- Check roof windows and store room window are securely closed
- Lock the Front door
- Double check door locked after key is removed
- You will be told what to do with the key before you start volunteering. This will depend on what day it is and who is opening the Centre the next day.