

SOUTHALL LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER NUMBER ONE APRIL 1962

WELCOME TO THE FIRST ISSUE.

Without doubt the Society is taking another step forward with this, the first issue of our own Newsheet, and I personally welcome the April number and hope that this venture will receive the success it deserves.

There is so much that needs to be said or reported for the benefit of members and friends, but very often there just is not the time at our meetings, or space in the Transactions. The need of a periodical newsheet had long been appreciated, but it has only recently proved possible. This comes about with our larger committee and the consequent benefit of being able to afford one committee member to carry through the project.

For this we must thank Mr. R.D. Wheeler, the editor, who took over the job in January and presented the Committee with a rough draft of the Newsheet in March, which is very good work indeed. Elsewhere in this issue Mr. Wheeler has requested contributions from you, the members, but I would like to add my plea, "Don't leave it all to the Committee, or Mr. W; you do your bit."

We want this to be news of the Society and its members. The items do not require to be historical, but can be of personal interest. If you have news, share it around through these columns. Anyway, I'm taking up too much space already, next time let's have your contribution.

A.J. Errington, Chairman.

EDITOR'S NOTE

ON November 24th 1885 the first number of SOUTHALL NEWS made its appearance on the local streets, and upon the occasion of our first issue, I feel that I can do no better than to cull a paragraph from that publication.

It reads "At the beginning of such an enterprise it is usual, and indeed necessary, for its promoters to outline the course that will be pursued; for unless it can be shown that a vessel is to be steered clear of rocks, shoals, and quick-sands, few people will be found—to take an interest in her, and share her chances of riding safe into harbour."

This number, then, will be largely of an explanatory nature, stating the aims and designs of your Committee in launching this small publication. Speaking personally I do not know just what harbour we expect to be riding safely into, but from experience I do know that the publication will founder with all hands without the active co-operation of all members of the Society.

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MEMBERS CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH

Membership of any organisation or society denotes an obvious interest in the aims of that society, but it is very true that on the whole membership usually means the adoption of a quiescent attitude, interested and attentive, but quite prepared to only listen to the experts.

Normally the cause of this outlook is the belief that one can add but little to the sum of human knowledge, but how very wrong such a belief can be has been proved time and again. Just because certain knowledge has been yours for many years, it is a mistake to assume that the knowledge is general, and it is one of the intentions of these Newsletters to invite members to contribute isolated pieces of historical information for publication herein.

In Pure Science research is often made without any end in view, but later, sometimes many years afterwards, two or more isolated and apparently unconnected discoveries are joined to reveal a process of universal benefit,(or destruction). Since the arguments have died down, and History is now regarded as an exact science, such research is not only permissible, but something to be greatly encouraged.

Taking the risk of being branded as intellectual snobs, we cautiously presume to suggest lines of action. Take, for example, the immediate vicinity of your residence; you probably know its entire history, but do you realise that the rest of us not only know very little on the subject, but would very much like to know more? After all, another name for Historical Research is Curiosity.

We have for some time nurtured a desire to know more about Southall street names, not all, of course, have any real significance, but many have links with the past.

The writer, once looking at an early map, noticed that a dwelling situated at the north east end of South Road was called Avenue House, so presumably this is the origin of Avenue Road. Is this

correct? The association, of Dr. Boyd and Boyd Avenue is well known, but without doubt there are many other instances not quite so obvious.

It may be that it is not your knowledge, but the very lack of it that is of interest. Perhaps a certain district, street, house, or footpath, has been a matter of interest to you for some time, but you have lacked the time or the facilities to pursue the matter. Send your queries to the Newsletter and the chances are that another member has some knowledge on the subject.

Now that you know how to help your fellow members, please jot down the odd facts that you know, or the information that you require, and hand them to Mr. Wheeler, or get him to make the note, and inclusion in the Newsletter will follow. This will make for a wider knowledge of our local history.

PROGRAMME MAY-DEC. 1962

MAY 14th. H. V. Jordan Esq. F.L.A. Southall Borough Librarian. THE MARTIN FAMILY IN SOUTHALL

MAY 27th. ANNUAL OUTING. Provisional arrangements have been made for the morning to be spent at St. Albans with lunch at that place. The afternoon at Waddesdon Manor. Full details will be announced later. The Cost will be approx. £1 or 25s.

JUNE 4th. Visit to Bulls Bridge Depot. Assemble at 7.45 p.m. at the Depot.

JULY 9th. M. Hilson Esq. Southall Local Hist. Soc. SOUTHALL AND NORWOOD CHARITIES.

SEPT. 10th. P.D. Whitting Esq. G.M. B.A. Hon.Sec. London Topographical Society. THE CONTENT OF LOCAL HISTORY

OCT. 8th. A.J. Errington Esq. Chairman, Southall Local History Society. NORTH ROAD SCHOOL.

NOV. 12th. B.J.T. Hanson Esq. Southall Local Hist.Soc. THE HANSON FAMILY.

DEC.10th. Annual General Meeting. MEMBERS NIGHT.

CONTROVERSY

Argument-Disagreement-Controversy. Put these three together in almost any circumstances and the result is acrimonious discord. Introduce them to historical discussion and the result is harmonious search for Truth. To be accepted, written or spoken history must be proven fact, so if you do not agree with anything said at our meetings do please rise and say so. Any lecturer worth his salt will thank you for correcting errors of fact or interpretation.

NEWS AND VIEWS

Excavation in Southall: Well perhaps not on similar lines to those of the Ministry of Works site at Northolt Manor but there's certainly plenty of digs in the Borough at the moment. One of our local "achievements" is to navigate a motor vehicle from the North to the South of the Borough. Apart from the bi-section of the town by the railway, we now have contractors engaged, it seems, in preventing the people of Norwood meeting those from Dormers Wells and points north.

Ah well, perhaps we shall have better roads at the end of it all. (Who said two bob on the rates as well?) But with all this digging I haven't heard of any more elephant or mammoth bones coming to light.

Our friends in the West Drayton Society had a nice write up in the "Telegraph" the other day. It seems that one of their members while fishing in a local gravel pit discovered amongst the spoil on the banks some animal bones at least 20,000 years old; since then members have been hard at work examining the gravel mounds, and their work has been well rewarded with more bones, pottery, and other items of archaeological interest. It is worth remembering that the two Southall Bronze Age "Hoards" now in the British Museum, were found in the vicinity of the gravel pits on Heston Airport. Would members be interested in a Saturday afternoon scouring of the pit area?

One of our members has been carrying a one man campaign to have the pump in the Uxbridge Road preserved, if not renovated. The member, Mr. Robinson, has written a letter to the local paper, and had it published, and has also requested the support of the Committee. I understand the Committee subsequently communicated with the Borough Engineer. We would do well to support this proposal.

Tentelow Lane looks less like its former self every day. There's no doubt that the bungalows and houses have an open space look about them, and with no discredit to their owners, have had their general appearance improved. It is still a great pity that the "Lane" had to go. Perhaps it will show improvement when there are a few trees and shrubs planted on the South side. Still, I do hear that speeds of eighty miles an hour have been achieved on this new motorway.

I understand the Committee are looking for ideas for a display at the 1962 Southall Show. Michael Hilson suggested some more models from Messrs. Green and Wheeler which everyone thought was a wonderful scheme, except Mr. Green and Mr. Wheeler. I wonder why?

Every day, it seems, an old building comes under the demolition contractors hammer. The old cottages next to Rusticum Garage in Wimbourne Avenue have gone, also the back end of the old Methodist Meeting Hall in South Road, until recently the Iron Bridge Garage showroom.

Our Society has an increasing number of requests for lecturers, and this gives us an excellent opportunity to address other local organisations. Current bookings are Miss Cooke giving a colour slide show of her wonderful New Zealand trip to the Holy Trinity Young Wives Club;

Michael Hilson talking to the Youth Hostels Association; and our chairman with his "Southall" lecture addressing the Kings Hall Young Wives Fellowship.

This gives one aspect of the work by members behind the scenes as it were.

EDITOR'S ODD THOUGHT. It has come to my notice that our Chairman has recently acquired a "Dormobile". Why go to the expense of hiring a coach for our outing? I always understood that these vehicles were built to take a dozen sitting, or thirty six at a pinch. Un-fortunately the chairman probably takes another view of the matter.

Mention is made in NOTES AND VIEWS of Miss Cooke's colour slide lecture on her New Zealand trip. I feel certain that a great many members of our Society would enjoy seeing these. Could not something be arranged?

BOOKS

VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY. MIDDLESEX VOL.111

This long awaited volume has at last appeared, and although the work has not yet reached the stage of dealing with Southall, the volume contains the continuation of the Spelthorne Hundred, the Isleworth Hundred, and the Elthorne Hundred parishes of Cowley Cranford, West Drayton, Greenford, Hanwell, Harefield and Harlington. Never-the-less there is much in this volume of interest to the Southall historian. We are informed that "By 1316 the thirteen Domesday manors (of the Hundred of Elthorne) had been increased by Little Greenford or Perivale, Southall in Hayes, and Uxbridge in Hillingdon.

A mention of Trade Unionism in Southall is made when we are told that "A Southall branch of the Plate Layers Union was formed following a mass meeting on the Green at West Drayton in September 1889".

The volume does not contain a vast amount of material dealing with our borough, but local historians have never been accused of being insular minded, and the book is very worthwhile taking off the Library shelves, (or even buying if you have £7.7.0 to spare). So much material of the history of the parishes on our borders is to be found within its covers, that it will be found very difficult to replace the volume on the shelf.

One criticism of the work is that it would not seem to have as many plates, facsimiles and plans as many of the previous volumes of the series. This fault seems difficult to justify on grounds of expense, as seven guineas seems to be a fairly economic price, and in addition a great deal of financial help is received. Also the series does have a guaranteed sale of a large number of copies.

ENGLISH LOCAL HISTORY HANDLIST

This little half-a-crown pamphlet issued by the Historical Association should be in the Possession of all members. It is a bibliography of books dealing with every aspect of Local History.

IT HAPPENED IN APRIL

1886. SOUTHALL. Albert Beckett, of odder, near Bath, was charged at the Brentford Petty Sessions, on the 27th. ult. with being a wandering lunatic. On the previous night he was rushing about the High Street shouting and declaring that his friends from Bath were pursuing him with white mice. He was remanded till Saturday last, when being more composed, he was discharged.

Southall News, April, 6th.

1886. SOIREE AT SOUTHALL. The third and last Soiree of the season was held by kind permission of W.F.Thomas Esq., at the Manor House Hall, on Thursday the 15th. inst. The season being somewhat advanced the room was at times unpleasantly warm (I always said that summer used to start earlier - ED.) but this was the only drawback to a most enjoyable entertainment. Upwards of 50 people were present, and nothing was lacking to make the affair a great success. The Refreshments were supplied by Mr. Jervis of the "Coffee Taverns"

Southall News, April 20th.

1887. DEATH OF AN OLD INHABITANT. On Monday morning last, at the Infirmary, Hillingdon, Mr. James Nicholls passed away at the advanced age of 75 years. In his youthful days he was an athlete of no mean order, having on one occasion run as link-man in front of the mail coach from the "White Hart" at Southal1 to High Wycombe, a distance of 20 miles, carrying a lighted torch, or rather a succession of them. He was afterwards gardener to Mrs. Lawes, whose mansion and estate occupied. the large area between South-road and Avenue-road, the front wall of which on the northern side stood about where the kerb now is in front of Southall Place.

Southall News, April 6th.

[Where was Southall Place? ED.]

1887. COTTAGE TO LET, in Waring's Field, Southall. Three rooms and Garden. Rent 3/- per week. Apply to G.F., Waring's Office, Southall.

Southall News, April 20th.

[Who was G.F. and where was Waring's Field?]