

SOUTHALL LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER NUMBER THREE

DECEMBER 1962

+++++

WE are delighted that our efforts in publication have received a very encouraging notice in the BULLETIN OF THE LONDON AND MIDDLESEX ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, where our Transactions were given the following notice:-

“In both content and format the Transactions of the Southall Local History Society set a high standard. With the refreshing conviction that even recent history merits careful attention, the Editor prints accounts of the local transport system and its development, and also of the local Gas Industry (vol.1); while for reference purposes there is a comprehensive guide to records of local interest (vol.2). An excellent study of the Norwood Charity School (vol.1) brings to life, in local terms, a phase in the development of the nation's educational system. Perhaps most encouraging of all, a younger member, not yet 21 contributes valuable accounts of a local church (vol.2) and the local Manors (vol.1)”

Our appeal for a few written words from our members has not been entirely ignored, but the material received has again been from old and tried sources and in asking for the co-operation of the general body of our membership, we do occasionally feel like a voice crying in the wilderness. Come now, give us the information we need to make a permanent record of your family history, your house, your street, and any other item of local interest.

NAMES AND PLACES

The "Bridge Hotel" on Western Avenue is in Greenford, and the "Greenford Hotel" stands by the Iron Bridge in Southall. The incongruity of these names with their respective sites may have been due to a bureaucratic error, for it has been said that when the authorities issued the necessary licences, the two names had been inadvertently transposed. Which is a good logical explanation why the "Bridge Hotel" is some way from any bridge, and the "Greenford Hotel" is in the Borough of Southall.

HORSENDEN HILL is one of the few hills to be found in Middlesex, and its name means "The hill fort flying the standard of the White Mare". On this hill are signs of the fortifications made by the Ancient Britons when a tribal boundary ran across the Brent Valley to Castlebar, and from the Brent at Perivale to Horsenden Hill.

Middlesex was the scene of much fighting between the Ancient Britons and the Roman invaders under Julius Caesar in 54 B.C. when the Imperial Army fought its way across the Thames at Brentford. The British Fort on Horsenden Hill may well have been the next objective of the Romans before their march on to Verulanium (St. Albans).

It is doubtful whether the area now covered by Southall was occupied by the Romans, even temporarily but should any Southall member uncover a tessellated pavement during garden or allotment digging operations, it could certainly be the subject of a most interesting paper for some future meeting.

W.J.G.

=====

We take this opportunity of saying “thank you” to Mr. Jordan for his efforts on showing us the Southall film.

## 1962: CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR

At the Annual General Meeting of the Society, held on Monday December 10<sup>th</sup> 1962, our Chairman reviewed the progress of the Society during the year, and we record his main points herewith.

THE NEWSLETTER has now completed its first year and without doubt it has come through with flying colours. The editor has received some very good contributions but not enough of them, and if some of our members are getting tired, of hearing me appeal for more, then they know the answer.

Our programme for the year was again of a very high standard, and when we consider that those lecturers travel some distance, bringing films, colour slides, and exhibits, it's a great pity that the numbers at meetings are not sometimes higher. However, it does appear that our Society has better support than most.

The two outings held during the year could have been better had more members attended, but those who did support the ventures were well rewarded.

Another setback-for the Society, and even more so for the Committee, was the loss of Michael Hilson, who has now gone to Nottingham University. Michael was always one of our hardest workers, and we can ill-afford the loss.

The Research Group got under way during the year, and despite a slow start is now seriously tackling the task of research into local street names. This will involve origination of names, classification into groups and historical background.

The Society organised two meetings of West Middlesex local history societies during the year. The first was a complete success, but the second was seriously affected by weather conditions. A third meeting is planned for March 1963.

We reluctantly withdrew from the Southall Show in August. It was not a unanimous decision of the Committee, some felt that we should exhibit. The main reasons for withdrawal were lack of working members during the August Bank Holiday period due to holidays etc. and it being felt generally that we had insufficient material to maintain the very high standard we had set in previous years.

The second "TRANSACTIONS" had been well received in its much improved form, and extremely favourable comments had been printed in reviews. The third "TRANSACTIONS", which should be available immediately after Christmas will be the publication of a selection of historical maps of Southall and the West Middlesex area. The whole collection has been compiled by our Borough Reference Librarian, Mr. P. Kirwan, and I would like to place on record, in this report, our sincere thanks and congratulations for such a fine effort.

There were eight meetings of the main Committee, all of which were reasonably well attended. Smaller groups of Committee members met on several occasions to progress a particular matter not requiring the full Committee. In 1962 the Committee was larger than that provided for by the rules. This proved a great advantage and enabled everyone's work to be lightened.

Attendance at meetings has averaged about fifty per cent of our total membership. From reports of other societies and organisations, this is understood to be fairly good, but your Committee is not satisfied and would like to see an increase in overall membership and attendance. Even more desirable is an increase in working membership

At the close of another year, I offer my sincere thanks to my Committee. Our President, Dr. Hector Smith, gives us all the support a busy man is able to, and has presented to the Library useful material on many occasions.

Once again, very many thanks to Miss Jean Cooke for relieving us all of a great deal of work; to Brian Hanson for looking after the finances so ably, and thanks to Jack Green for handling the public-ity side of the business. Thanks to Mr. Wheeler for our magazine, and also the Hilsons, father and son, and Mr. Neighbour. I have left our recorder,

Mr. H.V. Jordan to the last, because I trust that as Borough Librarian he will not only accept my thanks to him personally, but will also convey them to his staff in the Library for their help and assistance during the past year.

Finally, I would like to thank on behalf of the Committee and myself, all our members and friends for their support and interest; but I will take this opportunity of reminding you that the Committee is always interested in hearing your suggestions and opinions. Remember that the Committee is your Committee, elected by you, to carry out your wishes and the interests and aims of the Society. It is not a separate group, it is composed of ordinary members anxious to please.

A.J. Errington  
Chairman  
December 10<sup>th</sup> 1962.

=====

SOUTHALL'S FIRST POSTMAN

Are postmen a modern day luxury? Are they just a high grade Esso lubricant oiling the wheels of our ever quickening economy, or do they have a history of their own? The farmer, of course, first popped up along the Nile some six thousand years ago; shop keepers grew bloated over fat purses in Babylonian times, and even sewer-men could be found crawling around their insanitary pipes as early as the Roman period. But what of the Postman?

There are no definite records of athletic cave-men postmen staggering under the burden of 'billet doux' carved exquisitely in Egyptian limestone (stamped addressed envelope in marble enclosed), or yet of medieval Robin Hood-type messenger boys winging arrows from hillock to hillock bearing dramatic tidings of the latest scandals in Lowestoft or Hull. However, there can be little doubt that the history of the Postman is as ancient and honourable as any, and their work as indispensable to Alexander the Great as it is to Queen Elizabeth II. Over 2,000 years before the age of the horse drawn post-carriage or the "penny black", Phidippes ran 150 miles with a letter to Sparta, very few postmen need do that these days; Unions usually object.

Given, therefore, that the office of a postman is one of great distinction and antiquity, what of our own locality? As Southall is a very young borough it is understandable that the first postman should come late on the scene. Ironically enough, his name was William Hayes, and in 1794 he was described as "an ingenious artist who keeps the Post Office at South-Hall". At this time, presumably, he embraced all the general postal duties which are now spread over many departments; receiving mail, delivering it, selling letter forms and manuscripts, and giving information about the next stage coach to Bath. The Post Office at this time is believed to have been somewhere in the vicinity of the Red Lion hostelry.

What do we know of this strange man? Alas! His life was more than usually borne down with cares. His family consisted of no less than one wife and twenty one children. This was probably due to the very great shortage of postmen at that time. One can imagine these tiny messengers scudding about the town on numerous urgent pretexts, their sealing waxed envelopes lovingly grasped between grubby paws or peeping saucily from torn and well-worn pockets.

However, at this period, the life of a postman lacked the security it now enjoys, and by 1799 William Hayes was in such dire straits that the Vicar of Hanwell published " AN APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC TO SUPPLEMENT HIS INCOME MUCH SCARCELY EVER EXCEEDED NINETY POUNDS PER ANNUM".

Gradually his health broke; and weighed down with family worries, he apparently died soon after, for in an inventory of 1806, the humble cottage and land are shown merely in the name of his wife. As a hobby he painted portraits of many of the exotic birds at the Osterley Park Menagerie, and one volume of these is today displayed at the British Museum.

R.S.

=====

We are indeed grateful to the author of the preceding article, but what is of equal interest to us is the source from whence he has gleaned the information. He would seem to have access to some material that we know not of, and we would esteem it a very valuable contribution to our knowledge if more information on the subject was forthcoming. Perhaps the author of the article could be induced to write on his sources, and/or further articles culled therefrom.

=====

PROGRAMME 1963

January 14th.	MR. C. MOORE.	Hayes & Harlington Society ST. PAUL'S. Illustrated with slides.
February 11th.	MR. M. BAWTREE.	West Drayton & District Local History Society. LOCAL HERALDRY OF WEST MIDDLESEX.
March 11th.	MR. A.H. COX	West Drayton & District Local History Society LONDON & MIDDLESEX IN COLOUR. A colour slide programme.

=====

CHRISTMAS 1886

The following is a very much abridged version of an article appearing in the SOUTHALL NEWS in Dec.1886.

Christmas being a time of festivity the caterers for the public display their profusion. Starting with the eastern end of the town (Southall Park -ed.) we find a newcomer, Mr. Pearce, baker. Opposite is the Red Lion, next comes Mr. Chapple's display of meat, and then is Dorset House where we find an enormous display of goodies that come after the Christmas dinner. Adjoining is the Black Horse and then comes the White Hart. The next shop is that of Mr. George Newell the grocer, and adjoining him is Mr. Bradshaw's meat shop. Mr. Wheeler the printer comes next, and then Mr. Earle, tailor, and after that Mr. Pryor as a wheelwright and greengrocer.

Here comes the old George and Dragon, and next door is Miss Langler's drapery establishment. Mr. West is next with bread and corn, and opposite him is Mr. Marsh the great meat contractor. Next adjoining is Mr. Baxter the watchmaker and repairer and then Mr. Baldwin a bootmaker, his neighbour being Mrs. Neave with her tobacco and newspaper shop. Farther on is Mr. Allen the greengrocer and Mr. Charles Mead, a draper. Mr. Sivers, grocer is next, and next again is Mr. Langler's bakers shop. Opposite is Mr. Morton, greengrocer, and Mr. Powell, fishmonger. Then comes Abbott Bros. Bee Hive Factory and after this Messrs. Kerr and Meek for boots and shoes. Mr. Kimber comes next with tobacco and Mrs. Ayre, milliner and dressmaker. Following her is Mr. Rutland the draper.

---

The editor of the Newsletter regrets that he is unable to quote the article in full, but space does not permit; but he would strongly recommend members to read it in full. It will be found on page 236 in the bound volume of the Southall News in the Reference Library.