

SOUTHALL LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER NUMBER FIVE.

AUTUMN 1963

=====

COMMENT

It is indeed gratifying to discover that every appearance of this little publication is welcomed by members of the Society, indeed, the producers are very encouraged by the amount of comment and correspondence that has developed as a result of article's and notes appearing in the issues.

In particular, requests for historical information or verification of some uncorroborated details, have borne fruit not only in some expected places, but also the seed has germinated in faraway districts. The main feature of the present issue is an article dealing with queries raised in previous issues, and is based entirely on material supplied by Mr. C.P. Abbott and Mrs. K. Scott who writes from Bampton in Devonshire. These two good people firmly realise, as so few seem to do, that "common knowledge" is usually anything but common. The editor has seen a changing Southall for; let it be whispered, over fifty years, but some of the facts given by our two correspondents are certainly new to him.

All this is proof that this publication is not only intended for the perusal of members of the Southall Local History Society, but is primarily issued as a means of requesting and receiving information between members. Do please let the editor have your "Notes and Queries" no matter whether they be meagre or voluminous. The editor is R.D. Wheeler, and if you just cannot manage to see him at a meeting, just post it to him at 29, Park View Road.

=====

NEWS AND VIEWS

Without doubt, the outstanding events of the past few months have been the two exhibitions. The A.E.C. Gala Day unfortunately was a washout; the rain started in the morning and it continued all day long. Only about fifty people entered the doors of the exhibition and saw the array of material. This naturally was a big disappointment to the members who had worked so hard. One also feels very sorry for the kind people of the A.E.C. especially Thomas and his committee, who did all they could to assist the Society.

This comparative failure was offset by the success of the Southall Show. Our committee stated that they would not exhibit in the Grammar School and held out for a marquee in the main arena. They could not have made a wiser decision. Often a queue could be seen at the entrance to the Exhibition which was placed in an excellent position. The favourable comments made to the stewards by visitors were some reward for all the hard work which had been put into the show.

The Chairman, Secretary and Editor had produced a short history of the Borough for sale at the Show, and it was a complete sell-out; over 900 copies were sold, the last one selling an hour before the show closed on Monday, which, we feel, shows excellent planning.

Tribute must be paid, and I know the Chairman is raising this elsewhere, to the youngest of our helpers during the Show, namely Richard Hilson, and David and Susan Green, who are, of course, the offspring of Committee members Archie Hilson and Jack Green.

I hear that there will be a lot of heart searching before entering next year's Show. As always the majority of the work falls on to too few people. Only two weeks before the Show there were insufficient stewards to man the stands, and if others had not been found then it would have meant withdrawal.

As it was, committee man Chris Bull practically lived in the Park, and we should all be grateful that he could spare so much time. It does seem as though too few people are willing, though most probably able, to carry out the necessary work, which is spread over the three or four months prior to the show.

It is somewhat disappointing that we have not had a summer outing this year, but as there has not been a summer anyway, it is perhaps just as well such a function was not arranged as we might well have lost the small, but useful, addition to our exchequer gained through the sale of the Short History.

=====

We are always grateful for the receipt of straight fact without comment, as this is the material required by those working on projects. Such a note has been received from Dr. Hector Smith and it records another fact regarding the Dacre family.

Monumental Brass mural at the western end of the Church of St. Dunstan's in the West, Fleet Street. Kneeling figures representing Henry Dacres and His wife Elizabeth. Inscription below:-

"Here lyeth buried ye body of Henry Dacres citizen and marchant Taylor and sometime Alderman of London and Elizabeth his wyfe the which Henry deceased the (?) day of (?) the yere of Our Lord God MD (?) and the sayd Elizabeth deceased the XX111 day of April the yere of our Lord God MD and XXX."

Henry and Elizabeth Dacres were the parents of Alice Dacres who became the second wife of Robert Cheseman of Dormers Wells. Alice made her Will in 1558 in which she requested her burial to be made in her father's tomb in the Church of St. Dunstan's in the West.

=====

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTHALL

In response to our several pleas for information on points mainly relating to local topography, Mr. Abbott has given us the following information, and Mrs. Scott has also added to our knowledge.

SOUTHALL PLACE was a mansion standing in its own grounds occupying the site on High Street between Avenue Road, then a footpath, (the Church Paths?-ed.) and South Road, then known as Southall Green Lane. The House was occupied in 1856 by Mrs. Lawes, but the site was acquired by Samuel Minton of Windsor, who demolished the house and commenced development in about 1859, and as the cottages made their appearance on the main road, the terraced dwellings were known as Southall Place. As undeniable proof, Mr. Abbott points out that the name is still painted on the second shop from Avenue Road.

At their building, the cottages were, given some 15 feet of front garden, but the growth of the village demanded more shops so B. Hanson built a row of shops on these gardens, bringing, the building frontage up to the pavement, and in fact the terrace was then named The Pavement. Six of these shops are shown on the 1891 Ordnance Survey Map.

Cambridge Road and Hamilton Road were constructed ca.1866/67, and in fact the old wall which still separates the gardens of these roads is the original wall that enclosed the southern side of the lawn of the mansion.

In a spirit of public benefaction rare in any age, but particularly so in the land grabbing era of the latter half of the 19th. Century, Samuel Minton gave up between ten and fifteen feet of frontage in Southall Green Lane for the purpose of road development, and so this thoroughfare became known as South Road. Minton then went on to participate in the laying of the Jersey-Minton sewer in the road, which finally discharged under Kennedy's Garage.

This sewer, strangely to our contemporary ideas of Town Planning, was a private sewer, and presumably only those clients who paid for its services had its benefits, and in passing we do wonder about the sanitary arrangements of

the other dwellers in the parish. It was known as the Jersey-Minton sewer, and perhaps it is better to go down in posterity with your name connected with such a piece of public work rather than have it inscribed on a statue in the Town Square.

In 1896, however, the sewer was taken over by the Sanitary Authority, and so came under public control, and of more universal benefit. The actual construction of the sewer was carried out by Gibson, who lived in Northcott House, and as regards the location of this house, Mr. Abbott has very kindly supplied the editor with photo-stat copies of that portion of both the 1865 and the 1891 Ordnance Survey maps showing the "Town Hall" area, On this map Mr. Abbott indicates what is the most likely position of Northcott House as being on the west side of South Road just a little south of the Wesleyan Hall. Gibson may well have built on the Minton Estate, as he did own some houses in the area at the turn of the present century.

To the north of Northcott House, and covering the area now loosely designated as "Butler's Corner", stood Townsend House; Mrs. Abbott has a vague recollection of it as a rather uninteresting building. In 1886 it was occupied by Mr. W.H. Hudson, and here we have one of those poignant personal dramas that be-jewel the pages of local history. It seems that one of the male Abbotts wanted to marry Rose Hudson of Townsend House, but her heart was elsewhere, and she eventually married an Indian and sailed to India with her husband. We can only imagine what her life must have been like after an English upbringing, and the story ends tragically with her dying, some say of a broken heart, at the conditions of white women who married Indians.

Readers will remember that we also wanted information about the site formerly occupied by the Ministry of Labour. We are indebted to Mrs. Scott, who setting an example to members who live right here in the town, writes about this development. It was, as she so rightly says, on the corner of Church Avenue and she says, between the "Victory" (The Emperor of Prussia then - ed.) and Boots The Chemist, there stood an old mansion called Elmfield Lodge, which had large grounds which ran back as far as where Church Road is now. Adjoining these grounds were those of the Old Vicarage of St. John's, and the Vicarage itself stood in the centre of the grounds, which extended to, and the wall ran alongside, Havelock Road. In fact, some of the old garden is now part of the New Vicarage in Church Avenue.

Mr. Abbott also refers to the Ministry of Labour site, and in doing so makes reference to Featherstone Hall, which, of course, many of us remember well. But what is news, at least to the editor, is that it was also known as "Welch's Folly". Is this another story? We are familiar with Mr. Welch through the pages of the Southall News, but is this where he lived? Did he, in fact, build it and gain an unenviable reputation thereby? This correspondence must not cease, so many questions arise that need answering that it is a matter of public duty to fill in the gaps.

=====

PROGRAMME 1963

October 14th. DOUBLE FEATURE.

Mr. A.C. Hilson. Street Names of Southall

Mr .A.J. Errington Wales in Colour Slides

November 11th. By Special Arrangement.

Mr. A.F.Holman Area Planning Officer (South Middlesex) M.C.C.
MIDDLESEXITHECHANGING SCENE. with slides.

December 9th. Annual General Meeting and Members Night. Please make a great effort to attend.

CHAIRMANS NOTE

Our September Meeting was notable for two things; firstly we again had the great pleasure of saying "welcome", to Mr. Cox, Chairman of the West Drayton Society, who this time gave us a beautiful selection of colour slides illustrating his talk on "London and Middlesex". Secondly, we had the satisfaction of recording an increased attendance over the July meeting. But I do wish we could all see more faces more often. I do know that most of us are quite fully committed; but please try to remember that our meetings are on the

SECOND MONDAY OF EACH MONTH

and I trust I do not have to mention the venue.

A point that I must emphasize, as I must ruefully admit to doing many times previously, is that your Committee would like to hear from you regarding our programme of events, meeting night, meeting place, or any other topic on which you feel your comment is needed, and believe me, there must be many such occasions for comment or correction, as I just cannot believe that our Committee is quite perfect.

I would seize the present opportunity to thank all who helped so nobly with the two exhibitions. I know they will all agree with me when I say that we could have had even more assistance, particularly during the weeks when the exhibition was a-planning and a-building. At these times the task seems monumental and the helping hands so few.

On another page of this issue is recorded the efforts of Richard Hilson, Susan and David Green, and I feel sure that the sale of well over half of the "Short History" was due entirely to their efforts. I feel that in a few years time our committee will have at least three very lively members.

=====

BOOKS

Normally we try to mention as many titles as possible in the limited space available, but this time sees the publication of a work so important to our common interest, that it will be well to devote the whole page to it's notice.

The publication is VILLAGE RECORDS BY JOHN WEST and is issued by Macmillan at 30s. It has a short Foreword by Dr. W.G. Hoskins, a name very well known to all amateur historians, and in this he says, "realising the steady growth of interest in local history, he himself wrote LOCAL HISTORY IN ENGLAND," but, he goes on, "that short book could not answer all the questions that a good pupil or student would ask, so here is Mr. John West to give more detailed advice about the materials available for the study of village (or local - ed.) history, and the best way to handle them. As a lecturer in history at a well-known training college, Mr. West could not be better placed for the spreading of his enthusiasm; through the teacher, the history class can become a pleasure and no longer a half misunderstood chore."

Any history telling, no matter whether it be of London Town or a crofter's cot in the Outer Hebrides, should have continuity, and it is in this respect that I feel that Mr. West scores so heavily. We have all seen before so called "Guides" that point out this or that document seemingly at random, and we end by feeling very amateur indeed. Mr. West takes a single Worcestershire village and carefully explains, step by step, the historical material that can be used for the writing of its story. We are introduced in turn to Anglo-Saxon Charters and the Domesday Survey, The Manorial Rolls, Monumental Brasses, County and Other Maps, Parish Records, Quarter Sessions Papers, Enclosure Awards, Directories, and many other sources, and in the doing of it, Mr. West convinces us that most of the work is well within our capabilities. There are many facsimiles and illustrations, and also word lists of medieval and other trade names and place names.