

SOUTHALL LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No. 13 – WINTER 1966/67.

SOUTHALL IN AFRICA

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Recently our Hon. Sec., Miss Cooke, received a letter from Africa, and it is of such interest that it deserves a wider reading; therefore it is copied here verbatim.

'Heston'
29 Loch Road,
Claremont,
Cape Town
Sept. 20th, 1966.

Dear Madam,

A cousin of mine has presented me with a copy of the booklet 'Southall-Norwood: A Short History' which has aroused my interest in your Society. Although I am writing from overseas, I do hope that it will be possible for you to send me further details about the Society - particularly with regard to its three productions ("Transactions") and whether or no it -would be possible for me to procure copies of these. I would also much appreciate knowing if membership of the Society is restricted to persons resident in-the British Isles.

The reason for my interest in your Society is that my maternal ancestors, the Baxters, came from Southall the family having lived at the Farm, The Grange, Southall Green, for over 300 years. Great-Great Grandfather, Henry Phelps Baxter, who will be remembered at Southall as being the founder of the interesting Barn mission Church, gave up the old family home when he retired from farming in 1900. I have some relics from the old home in my possession, and as my Grandmother often spoke of her Grandfather's home (her childhood home for sixteen years) my interest in Southall, Norwood, Heston, and Osterley Park (where the family picnicked in the 1880's) is very keen.

I look forward, with great interest, to the pleasure of hearing from you shortly, and am, madam,

Yours faithfully,

Michael A. Smith.

Needless to say, Miss Cooke replied to the letter in the informative manner with the result that Mr. Smith obtained a set of our Transactions. Letters like this bring a gleam to the eye of the newsletter editor - there are so many possibilities! Ever on the alert for interesting "copy" he sees this as a further link in the project he envisaged some time back - a printed record of the Baxter family. Mr. Smith speaks of "some relics of the old home", what are these, and will they help us to piece together the story of one of Southall's oldest and most influential families? If Mr. Smith thinks that he can whet our appetites in this manner and then retire, he can think again. We warn you, Mr. Smith, when we start to gather information on the Baxters, you will be hearing from us.

LOOKING AT BOOKS

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In my perambulations round the bookshops, I always keep a watch for interesting 'remainders', as in addition to many of them being very good books, I always have the feeling of having secured a bargain. Recently there seems to be another crop of promising historical works; I came across Hermann Schreiber's 'History of Roads, from Amber Route to Motorway' and whilst I suppose it could be said that the author tries to put too much into one book, dealing with roads all over the globe, I found it mightily interesting. Published at 35s. it now sells at 18s.

Another volume, dealing with subjects nearer home next attracted my attention. It was "Bridge, Church, and Palace in Old London" by John E. N. Hearsey, published at 28s. but now on the shelves at 10s.' This is a well-illustrated work dealing comprehensively with the history of Old London Bridge, representing The City, Old Saint Paul's for The Church and Old Whitehall Palace for The Court.

Being currently interested in archaeology, I was delighted to find a little volume entitled 'Terms Used in Archaeology. A Short Dictionary' by Christopher Trent. I did not begrudge the half-crown spent on this. Another two and six could well be spent on another small book called "Archaeology for Fun A Quiz Book." By G. Ridsdill Smith. I must confess I was heartily thankful that the answers are included as my archaeological knowledge was found to be wanting.

Moving from the remainders, a new publication came into view. It was a pamphlet of 80 pages or so, issued by the Historical Association, and entitled "English Local History a Handlist. A Short Bibliography for the Study of Local History" edited 'by F. W. Kuhlicke and F.G. Emmison. This book is an arrangement by subject of recommended books and this is so successful that it almost makes the excellent index unnecessary. It casts its net quite widely, dealing with such subjects as Topography, Names, Prehistory, Roman Britain, Documents, Industry and Trade, Transport, Religious history, Architecture, Education, Costume, Folklore and many others. It costs 8s. 6d. and is an absolute necessity for the local library and also for the serious student of local history.

DORMERS TELLS EXCAVATION - PROGRESS REPORT

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Digging has continued at the Dormers Wells site on most Sundays when the weather has allowed. Most of the time has been spent in continuing the trench across the supposed moat on the east side of the area. After excavating an area approximately five feet wide by twenty feet long to a depth of between nine inches and a foot, a hard bed of earth and stones has been revealed and this is obviously the bed of a stream. Unfortunately no pottery has been found by which to date it, and so whilst this may be the original moat surrounding the Manor house, it may equally well be of more recent origin. This trench extends from the inside of the moat to half way across it and I decided to leave it at this point as something curious came to light in the centre of the area.

Over the weeks the weeds had been growing and there gradually appeared an area in the centre which was relatively free from weeds and the grass thereon was shorter than that growing on the surrounding area. The shape suggested by this phenomenon was of a large oblong with other smaller squares joined to it. This strongly brought to mind the description of Dormandswell in the Will of Robert Cheseman (1545), "...my great hall at Dormandswell with all chambers buttress kitchens and all other houses of office belonging to the same on the south side of the Chappell and ... all other parlours buttreys and kyches with all other houses of offyces and chambers..." (see Transactions No. 1, 1959, page 4.) With this in mind I opened up a trial trench 26 inches by 29 inches with one half in the weeds and the remainder in the clear area. Although this revealed what appeared to be a very hard mud and stone floor at 6 inches down, there was no trace of walls and potsherds for means of dating.

Apart from helping in the work, Dr. Smith has continued searching at the Public Record Office, and has come up with several more items which add to the story. These include several deeds dated from 1570 to 1581 which mention the manor and lands of Dormandswell, and also copies of the Manor Court Roils which on one occasion, in the early sixteenth century, were stated to have been held at Dormandswell. This may or may not have been regular occurrence as the meeting place of other courts is not recorded.

The future of the dig is, at the moment, uncertain, but as soon as anything further is decided I will contact those concerned.

Alan Skates.

August, 1966.

THE BAPTIST CHURCH, SOUTHALL

As our readers will know, we are attempting through the pages of the Newsletter to trace the religious life of the town through the story of its churches. This issue brings the outline history of the Southall Baptists.

From the sixteenth century, some members of the Protestant faith differed in their interpretation of the Christian life from that recognised by the Established Church of England. This non-conformity could be, indeed was, a dangerous belief, and often led to imprisonment, even perhaps death. About the year 1600, many English Baptists fled to Holland to escape the religious persecutions of the age, but about 1611, encouraged by a more tolerant attitude then prevailing, some of them ventured to return to resume an uneasy and insecure existence as a Baptist congregation in London, and today, after seeing the various historic acts of religious toleration, the Baptists in Great Britain number some 385,000 souls, all still firmly believing in the mainstay of their faith - that it is an error to baptize an uncomprehending infant but that baptism by total immersion should be practised by those of mature age when deciding for the Christian life.

The Baptists have always had a very strong missionary tradition, and thus it was that they founded the Metropolitan Tabernacle Mission and, on the 3rd of February 1884, this body commenced the work of spreading the gospel truths in the village of Southall. We have mentioned in a previous issue that the social and political life of the community in the three hamlets of Northcot, Southall Green and Norwood was centred on the Southall Coffee Tavern near the Railway Station, and as this was also a temperance house, it was natural that the initial gatherings of the Baptists were held here.

Then the dreadful fire of 1888 destroyed the Coffee Tavern, the Baptists, like so many other Southall Societies, had to seek other accommodation. Providentially, Southall's notable benefactor was always there to help, and Mr. Henry Baxter invited the Baptists to hold their services of Christian truth in his barn, and this they made their home for a short time until they later made use of a butcher's shop opposite Mr. Baxter's house.

By 1889 the movement had gained such strength as to form the Southall Baptist Mission, and the members set about the task of raising a building fund. This was no easy task for nineteenth century working men, often unemployed, but, mainly through the Sale of cards of "threepenny bricks", the sum of £55 was raised and used to purchase a corrugated iron building, and this was erected on a site situated at the junction of St. John's Road and Western Road. It is interesting to note that it is believed that this building, via St. George's, eventually found its way to its present site at the Congregational Church in Villiers Road.

The Church began its mission on April 17th 1889, and on that Wednesday afternoon, twenty persons were gathered together to sing the first hymn "All Hail the Power of Jesus Name". Teaching the young was always regarded as of primary importance, and on Sunday May 22nd 1889 the Sunday School commenced its Work. The building lacked the proper baptism facilities, so all baptisms were held at the Cranford Chapel.

1894 saw the appointment of Mr. T.G. Williams as the honorary Pastor and, in May of that year, the Official Formation of the Church with a register of nineteen names. These early workers must have been truly endowed with the spirit of service, and the years that follow show a record of continuous

building and extension. July 24th 1901 witnessed the stone laying of the new School Chapel and by November 13th the official opening was performed. However, by 1912 the work had outgrown its space, so a new School Building was erected.

Perhaps one of the most outstanding dates in the history of the Church was May 11th 1902, for it was on this day that the Reverend Henry Smith of Faringdon commenced his Ministry. He gave over thirty four years of devoted service, retiring in September 1936, having in that time become one of Southall's most respected and best loved figures. It was during Mr. Smith's Ministry that, in 1926, the two manual organ was installed, and in 1928 the extensions were added to the Church Buildings and a new front added, making the building appear as we know it today.

Following the Rev. Henry Smith, the ministry was taken over by the Rev. Hugh Butt, who preached the Baptist gospel until 1947, when his place was taken by the Rev. Leslie Elliott who for the next five years watched over the progress of the Christian teaching.

The Rev. Derek Rogers filled the pulpit from 1952 to 1956, and in that latter year the present Pastor, the Rev. Donald Cranfield, began his work for Christ in the Church. Of all those who have laboured for God in that place, it is probably the present occupier who has the greatest task; cynicism and disbelief are of an order that would probably have seemed impossible to those pioneers of 1884, and yet, perhaps, the early Baptists of the sixteenth century would have found it a familiar atmosphere.

BOOK REVIEW

'SOUTHALL - A BRIEF HISTORY' by PAUL KIRWAN.

In the past, local histories have always been the product of original research and any local historian worth his salt had to have an understanding of archives and be an expert in Latin and Paleography in order to decipher them. Today, however, it is becoming increasingly popular to use secondary sources aims to borrow heavily from earlier histories. Paul Kirwan has tended to follow this more popular trend. He was formerly Reference and Technical Librarian of Southall Public Libraries and is better known to us as the author of that very useful paper 'Historical Maps of Southall' published in our Transactions No.3 for 1961, and it is quite obvious that his familiarity with the old maps of Southall proved invaluable to Mr. Kirwan when he came to write it's history. He has also found our Transactions Nos. 1 and 2 very useful and one feels that he has not given them sufficient acknowledgement. Unfortunately our Transactions No.5 were not available when he drafted the 'Brief History' and for this reason he is only able to mention one charity - that of Francis Awsiter and he is rather muddled about its provisions.

Mr. Kirwan's purpose in writing his 'Brief History' is to provide a framework for the more detailed papers contained in the Transactions and to try to be a small plug in a big gap until something more appropriate is provided. Hence he takes a rather misguided approach to his subject and falls into the trap of spending rather a lot of time talking about the administration of England under the Saxons, the feudal system of the Normans, living conditions during the Middle Ages, and the growth of London, all information that can be gleaned readily from any 'O' Level History textbook.

The material that remains is good though very little will be new to members of this Society. One seems to forget that, as Reference Librarian, Mr. Kirwan had in his charge the local collection of 'printed, manuscript, and illustrative matter relating to local affairs' and thus had a great opportunity to do some research and produce a comprehensive history. One can only assume that he was under a misapprehension when he states in his introduction, "I am not competent to undertake such a task even if I were to devote any amount of energy to it in fact Mr. Kirwan admits that he owes a great debt 'to the late Geoffrey M. Bark, a former officer of the Borough Council who compiled copious notes that Mr. Kirwan .used as the basis for his 'Brief history'.

The general pattern Mr. Kirwan's work seems to involve either himself in some confusion over definitions or his readers in some uncertainty about his meanings. This arises from his inability to qualify some very dubious statements and his unwillingness to admit that some of his postulations are mere guesswork. Mr. Kirwan finds the history of the manor lands sketchy and somewhat confusing. He thinks that the first manor of Southall may have been in the Waxlow area, but finds a more likely site at Dormans Well. He does not know whether there was one or too manors of Norwood and of Southall and seems to use the word 'manor' alternating between singular and plural on successive occasions. He is uncertain about what became of the Manor House at Dormans Wells and he throws present theories about the origin of the Manor house at Southall Green into confusion. He has nothing to say about the village of Northcote before 1587 and even. at this point only makes a passing reference to a Will. He talks about a tally of lands undertaken in 1649, and a survey made in 1677 for the Lord of the Manor of Hayes and quotes the same manuscript reference as his source for both statements. After about 1800 he is on firmer ground, but here however, he says nothing about such institutions as the Workhouse, the Isolation hospital, not to mention the

drinking habits of the local population. He pays scant attention to the schools and_ has no time for the non-conformist churches.

Nonetheless, taken as a whole, Mr. Kirwan's 50 page treatise is of the utmost value and significance. It deserves attention not only from the population of Southall, but also from any historian wanting an illustration of the way an English village community developed out of obscurity. The history of Southall is not the easiest of tasks to undertake, so anyone bold enough to tackle the project, whilst inviting criticism, deserves unstinted praise, and I would unhesitatingly recommend 'Southall - A Brief History'` by Paul Kirwan, not only to our new members as a background to our monthly meetings and publications, but also to our established members so that they might pinpoint the gaps in Southall's history as a prelude to further research. The work was published by Southall Public Libraries in March 1965 and copies are available from the Reference Library at 5s.6d. Hurry now, whilst stocks last!

CENTENARY OF NORWOOD GREEN CRICKET CLUB

Nineteen sixty seven will bring a most noteworthy event to the North Green Cricket Club, no less an occasion than the celebration of their hundredth anniversary. This is indeed the stuff local history is made of. The very existence of the Club, with its rural suggestion of 'cricket on the green', is one of the strongest links that the present industrialised town of Southall has with, its past. Our Society offers its sincere congratulations to the Club and also our best wishes for its continued success. We feel sure that the present Club members have a fitting sense of responsibility to their heritage.

To mark their Centenary the Club is preparing an historic record of their hundred years of sport, and a Club member is busily delving into the files of the local press in a search for reports of the Club's activities and, in addition to this, the Club's secretary, Mr. Wilton, has appealed to our Society for any assistance we can afford him in the matter. We gladly respond to this request, and in return appeal to our own members to search their memories for incidents that may help in the writing of the story. If you can help, please jot down your notes and send them to the editor, R.D. Wheeler, at 29 Park View Road, Southall. Any documentary records, such as handbills, leaflets, programmes, would be invaluable material on the project. Of course, if there is someone who is willing to actually undertake research work on this important subject, the offer will be eagerly accepted.

There is some urgency about the whole appeal as 1967 is suddenly much nearer than we thought.

FOLLOWING THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, the elected Committee was:

President- Mr. A.J. Errington	165 Tentelow Lane, Southall
Chairman - Mr. A.C. Hilson	51 Melbury Avenue, Southall
Recorder – Mr. A.R.P. McNae	District Library, Osterley Park Road
Secretary - Miss J.E. Cooke	21 Longford Avenue, Southall
Treasurer - Mr. W.J. Green	6 Longford Avenue, Southall

Committee

Mr. F. Dumbleton	196 Norwood Road, Southall
Mr. B.J.T. Hanson	31 Sherborne Avenue, Southall
Mrs. C.G. London	220 Tentelow Lane, Southall
Mr. R.D. Wheeler (vice chairman)	29 Park View Road

PROGRAMME FOR 1967

Jan. 9th.	Acton and Its Past. R.N.G. Rowland Esq., Ea1ing. Local History Society.
Feb. 15th.	Osterley. Rex L. Sayer Esq.
Mar. 15th.	Aspects of Local History in Uxbridge, with Colour Slides. Presented by members of Uxbridge Local History and Archives Society.
Apr. 10th	London Displays It's Past, with Colour Slides. Presented by R.G. Edwards Esq., Ruislip, Northwood and Eastcote Local History Society
May 8th.	Lloyds, with Colour Slides. A.C. Nilson Esq., Chairman, Southall Local History Society.
June 12th.	Outing - Details later.
July 10th.	The Do-it-Yourself Genealogist. W.J Green Esq., Southall Local History Society.
Aug. 14th.	History and Art of Bellringing. W.H. Coles Esq.
Sept. 11th.	River Thames in the 20th Century. Miss G. Udall.
Oct. 9th.	The Beauty of Old Churches. Lawrence E. Jones Esq.
Nov. 13th.	Heston and Isleworth in the 18th Century. Miss A. Cameron
Dec. 11th.	Annual General Meeting.