

Southam Heritage Collection

(formerly Friends of the Cardall Collection)

NEWSLETTER

No 21: Autumn/ Winter 2017



Chairman's Message

It won't surprise those of you who follow our affairs to know that rarely does a week go by without some significant activity. The Management Committee meets every 5 to 6 weeks, and there are always decisions to make, ideas to be discussed and plans to be made. This twice-yearly Newsletter contains lots of information about our activities and projects, and I hope you find it interesting and informative.



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

A major step forward this year has been our change of legal status to a registered Charity. From the very early days of the Collection we have been recognised as a Charity by HMRC, but we didn't apply for official Charity Commission recognition because we were advised we were too small and it wasn't essential. However, with the prospective move to Tithe Place we decided it was time to take this step. Having spent some time decoding the official guidance, we needed to hold an EGM to amend the Constitution, only to be told by the Charity Commission afterwards that we needed a second amendment, and hence a second EGM! I would like to thank all those who took the time to turn out for these meetings and record their votes. It wasn't an exciting process but it was necessary and we have achieved our objective.

We are now a registered Charity and our number is 1173033. This should smooth our path in terms of taking on property leases and also enable us to apply for a wider range of grants.

Annual General Meeting & Committee Changes

Our AGM was held on Tuesday 17th October and was well attended. The Accounts were accepted, and all but one of the Committee agreed to stand again and were re-elected. The three Officers

(Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer) all agreed to continue in their roles.

Having moved to Badby in Northamptonshire three years ago, long-standing Committee member, Helen Morris, decided to leave the Management Committee this year. She has already started a new History Group in Badby village which held its first exhibition in September. Fortunately, Helen will remain with us as a Trustee, providing assistance whenever possible.

As well as participating in many different heritage events and projects, Helen led the oral history team, researched the local cement industry and wrote a very popular A to Z Guide to Southam Zoo.



The Committee thanks Helen for her huge contribution to the work of Southam Heritage Collection over the past 11 years. We will miss her - but Southam's loss is Badby's gain!

We are pleased to report that two new members who attended the AGM have agreed to come along to our next meeting to see if they would like to join the Committee. If you are interested in coming along to a Committee meeting, do please contact Bernard on 01926 613503.

For those of you unable to attend, the Minutes of the AGM including the Chairman's Report and the Annual Accounts can be viewed on our website www.southamheritage.org From the home page click on 'Events', then 'Past Events', '2017 AGM'.

Wanted: Minutes / Note taker

There is one task that we urgently need assistance with. Our Secretary, Linda, is heavily involved in most of our activities. Her work includes organising exhibitions, events, talks, visits, history walks, social events, research and fund-raising. We desperately need someone to take on the task of minuting our Committee

Southam Heritage Collection (incorporating the Cardall Collection and Alan Griffin photographic archive) comprises artefacts, documents, photographs and memorabilia associated with Southam and its surrounding villages. The County Museum Service inspectors agree that it is an important record of the life and times of our historic market town. The Collection needs a permanent home in Southam where it can be displayed, used and appreciated by the general public, local history societies, schools, reminiscence groups and researchers.

meetings so that Linda can concentrate all her efforts on project work – can you help?

We usually meet at Vivian House for a couple of hours on Wednesday afternoons about once every 6 weeks. The meeting time and day can be altered to suit you. It is not too onerous a commitment, but is a vital job. If you would like to help, do please get in touch with Linda on 01926 814214.

Tithe Place

This Newsletter would not be complete without a mention of the empty community rooms in Tithe Place. Unfortunately, our plan to create a museum for Southam in Tithe Place is no further forward. We don't have any positive news to report, although we have increased the pressure on Orbit and on Stratford District Council through our elected representatives. If there are no developments by the end of October we will be invoking promised help from the highest levels, and you cannot get much higher than Cabinet Ministers! Watch this space – our patience has reached its limit.

Vivian House

Earlier this year we renewed our lease on the basement of Vivian House for a further 5 years. Even if we manage to secure a community room in Tithe Place, we anticipate that it will not be big enough to store, work on, and display the Collection. Our intention is to keep the basement as storage and working space, and to use Tithe Place as our showcase to the wider community.

The costs of potentially renting two properties will be high, especially as Vivian House is an older building. This means that to remain sustainable in the long term, fund-raising and sponsorship will continue to be a dominant feature of our activities. If anyone has ideas or suggestions about how we can raise funds, or would be prepared to lead a small team to look at this area, then please do get in touch.

Calendars and Christmas Cards

The Southam Heritage 2018 Calendar is now on sale at just £5 per copy. Our annual calendar is a major fund-raiser and we are grateful to all the local businesses that either sponsored pages or agreed to sell the calendars on our behalf. You can buy your calendar at the following local outlets:

Southam Post Office
Southam Carpets
Southam Office Supplies
Rockingham on Market Hill

or by contacting us direct or visiting our HQ at Vivian House on Tuesday mornings between 10am and 12 noon.

In addition to our calendars, this year we have also produced a limited edition Christmas Card for sale.

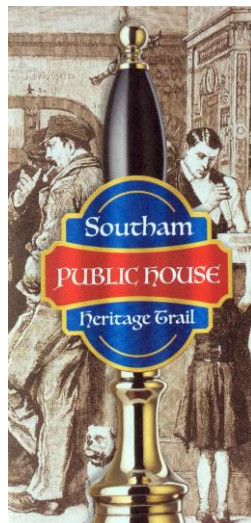


The card depicts the Craven Arms in the coaching era and the message inside reads 'Season's Greetings'.

It has been produced using an original watercolour painting by Pam McConnell, our Treasurer. The cards are available to buy for £1.20 each from Vivian House on Tuesday mornings, but if you have any difficulty obtaining either cards or calendars, please contact us direct.

Summer Exhibition

The 2017 summer exhibition, 'A Pint of Ale', was researched and developed by Linda and was all about Southam's public houses, past and present. This theme was chosen because of the continuing decline in the number of public houses in the town - The Bull Inn, now converted to residential accommodation, and the former Beeswing being closed and for sale.



It proved to be a fascinating exhibition, and attracted not just local people, but visitors from all over England and as far away as Canada. Some were descendants of Victorian and even earlier Georgian publicans, and although some have been able to tell us about their own family connections, others were visiting Southam for the first time and learnt about previously unknown local stories - a wonderful mixture all round.

Local sponsorship was obtained with The Bowling Green Inn, providing the main finance, and generous visitors providing the balance.

Associated with the exhibition we applied for and were grateful to secure a





Tesco 'Bags of Help' grant to provide guided town walks, display material and an informative 'Southam

Public Houses Heritage Trail' leaflet. This leaflet contains snippets of information about each property and a map of where all those public houses were, or still are. The leaflet costs just 50p and it has proved to be very popular. It is ideal as a guide for a leisurely wander with friends or family round Southam town centre and perhaps with a drink, coffee or even a meal, in one of the four remaining public houses. (Supplies of the leaflet are still available now that the exhibition has closed.)

Originally Linda identified over 20 public houses, but she has recently found a thirtieth one! It has become such a topic of interest and research that she has started to collate material with the intention of writing a book about Southam's Inns and Pubs.

On collection, I was greeted by several residents who told me how they enjoyed having it there and look forward to further mini-exhibitions. The staff also informed me that one particular gentleman with dementia had spent a lot of time reading and re-reading it as it held memories for him in his earlier years.

The display boards were then taken to Galanos House and set up in their foyer. They had similar responses from their very interested residents. Both the old photographs and the articles provide interest to residents and visitors alike.

Galanos House staff have also asked us to do some interactive history visits with their residents and the daughter of one lady has offered to work with us and Galanos in a community effort. It is by working with our older residents that we can build up a more personal picture of the earlier 20th century town. We will be pleased to have others join us in these sessions.

Publications For Sale

Christmas is approaching and those of us who need to post gifts overseas are already looking for ideas.

We have our Calendars and usual publications for sale: "Southam Through the Centuries", "The Battle of Southam 1642", "Southam Zoo" and Alan Griffin's WW1 and WW2 books. These would make ideal presents for those with an interest in Southam. We also have a supply of Warwickshire history books: "Victorian Warwickshire", "Warwickshire Ghosts" and "Warwick" which were kindly donated to us by Tesco.

You can obtain all our publications by calling into Vivian House on Tuesday mornings between 10am and 12 noon – or by contacting us direct. We can arrange to post items to you for an additional £1.50 for post & packing.

Mini Exhibitions

Southam United Charities have provided us with a lightweight display board suitable to set up mini-exhibitions after our main exhibitions have finished. As many people are unable to manage the stairs at Vivian House, we have tried it out in two locations in Southam and we hope to broaden it to the villages in due course.

The 2016 main exhibition was on the local cement industry, so we reduced the display to a small number of boards and some printed material that can be picked up and read alongside. This was then set out in the resident's foyer of Tithe Lodge and left there for several weeks.

BBC Coventry & Warwickshire

We often send out lots of publicity notices and think it's perhaps overlooked by the media. However this year we realised that it's not so much overlooked as 'put to one side' until convenient. It can be the difference between a good news day and a bad one! So it was with surprise that we were contacted 'out of the blue' by Keith Wedgebury from BBC Coventry and Warwickshire.

Keith had been thinking about visiting our Spring exhibition about WW1, but by the time he got around to contacting us, the exhibition had finished and we were about to launch our summer public houses exhibition! However, it worked out very well all round, because Keith came with his technical BBC van, parked it outside the Library, and did a live broadcast from Southam whilst visiting the newly opened 'A Pint of Ale' exhibition.

Linda was the lucky one who entertained Keith and they finished the afternoon with a drink at the Bowling Green Inn.

Ramblers History Walk

For the past two Summers, we have conducted a guided 'History Walk' in partnership with Southam Ramblers. The aim is to provide some background historical information about the features of the landscape along the way.

This year, on Wednesday morning July 12th, members of Southam Ramblers and the Heritage Collection met for a guided walk around the village of Ladbroke. It was not a difficult or long walk, and thirty of us enjoyed a pleasantly warm

and dry wander around the outskirts of the village, returning to the village hall after a couple of hours.

The first field proved to be tough going through blue lias clay. Walk guides, Linda and Nigel, (having walked the route some days before) were surprised to see that the short mown grass of the permissive path had been ploughed up! However, once we reached the hard farm-track over the hill, it became a comfortable walk underfoot.

It was clear to see how people walking the pathways of old could use the tall spires of churches to guide them through the countryside. All Saint's spire showed as a spike on the horizon, and from the top of the hill one could locate distant but distinct features on the horizon of windmills, woodland and roads. These would all have been useful to the drovers bringing their cattle and sheep across country from Northamptonshire to Southam and Warwick Markets in the past. The site of a Roman farmhouse was also pointed out.

Coming into Ladbroke from the south we had an excellent view of the rear of Ladbroke Hall as we came down into the village, where the church doors were open to receive visitors.

From the church, we walked through the mediaeval fields of the original village centre, fishponds and manor, that in the 18th century was destroyed by the new estate owner. All the cottages near the church (except for one which the owner refused to sell) were pulled down, and the land and ponds were landscaped in 'Capability Brown' style.

We stopped on the Millennium Green for a coffee break, having admired the now flourishing wildflower meadow, before heading off past Ladbroke House to Windmill Lane. We paused under the spreading chestnut tree outside the old blacksmiths and looked towards Ladbroke House where Henry Schwind had lived, who started Ladbroke Bookmakers in the early 20th century.

A final short walk took us up Radbourne Lane, where we looked at the old Polish camp buildings remaining from WW2. We saw how close the HS2 railway was going to go by the village and speculated if the mound by the road there was "the usual place" where the Court Leet met in past years, before moving to the nearest public house, ie the Bell Inn.

Summer Social

Once again we met up at the Southam Cricket Club for a Summer evening social event in August. Continuing with the theme of our 'A Pint of Ale' exhibition, the evening meal was 'pub grub' style – a tasty steak and ale pie and chips, followed by gateaux and coffee.

Our entertainment was a mixture of talk and singalong, with 'Pearly King & Queen' Geoff and Joan Todd from Deddington bringing along their street organ. For more than 20 years they have been travelling around the UK and Europe, entertaining people with their talks and songs and fundraising on behalf of the Macmillan Nurses.

What we hadn't expected was Bernard and Linda, along with another member whose birthday it was, being asked to give a rendition of Old MacDonalds Farm to organ music with special effects! More of the audience were involved in performing the Hokey Cokey, (although some clearly needed a reminder of how it went!) It did create some hilarity towards the end of the evening and a good time was had by one and all.



Doing the Hokey Cokey

Open Gardens & Retro Revival

We opened the exhibition during Southam In Bloom's biennial 'Open Gardens' weekend in July. By appearing on the programme / map for the event, we achieved some great publicity, and also a good number of visitors.

Then on Sunday 1st October, we opened up during Southam First's 'Retro Revival' – a very busy and successful town centre event. We were pleased to see over 40 people take the time to visit the exhibition.

Other Activities

Here is some information about other activities and events we have participated in since the last Newsletter, and also some news of forthcoming events.

Southam History Fair: Saturday 20th May This was a new venture for us and was organised in partnership with Southam St James Church. It was a great success with plenty of interesting displays by local history enthusiasts. We hope to run this event again in 2019.

Leamington History Fair: Saturday September 16th. We took part in this annual event again, and our display featured a subset of photos from our earlier WW1 photographic exhibition: 'Caring for the Wounded'.

Warwick Words: On Saturday 7th October, Linda represented us as the Warwick Words event in Warwick Museum, where we sold a number of our publications

Pub Trail Walks: In conjunction with the 'Pint of Ale' exhibition, Linda has conducted a series of themed walks this Summer around the town, focusing on the many buildings that are, or were, public houses.

Cubs & Brownies visits: Southam Cubs have visited us on several occasions in the past, but this Autumn we have also welcomed the Brownies for the first time.

Thornley Kelsey Brewery Talk: Tuesday October 10th in The Bowling Green Inn's new extension. Another very successful event, in a new venue that worked well for all concerned.

German Students Guided Town Walk: Friday October 13th. This annual exchange visit is organised by Southam College. The students attend a reception in The Grange Hall followed by a guided walk around the town with our volunteers.

October Half Term Children's Session: A special Children's activity morning was organised around the 'Pint of Ale' exhibition. Nigel Chapman assisted us and with his help we hope to make this a regular event in the school holidays.

John Turner Festival: Saturday 4th November. Organised by Southam & District Lions, we have a stall at this event every year with a small heritage display and our Calendars, publications and cards for sale.

Wolf Run: Sunday 5th November. This is a military style cross-country race in which the competitors face mud, water, and obstacles to overcome. A team is entering on our behalf, with their sponsorship money being donated to Southam Heritage Collection. You can find out more and donate until 12th November by following this link:

<https://mydonate.bt.com/events/winterwolfrun2017/442718>

STOP PRESS: The first exhibition next year (opening in January) will be entitled 'All Our Yesterdays' and will feature a selection of the intriguing artefacts and documents from the Collection. Later in the year we will be focusing on the commemoration of the ending of World War I.

Centenary Archive

Over the past three years Val Brodie, aided by Chris Jerome and Chris Holding, has been researching and exhibiting a mass of information

about the men and women of Southam and the local villages who responded to their country's call.

Alan Griffin has paid tribute to those who died in his book "Lest We Forget". Val has pursued the stories of the hundreds who served and survived the War, although in a number of cases with terrible injuries. This work is ongoing and Val welcomes new information, photos and other material to include in Southam's WW1 Centenary Archive.

Next year will be the last year of the WW1 centenary period and we are expecting a significant upsurge in interest as we count down to Armistice Day in November 2018.

We are starting to plan a major exhibition for the second half of 2018 and we have also started to work with other organisations in Southam to commemorate the sacrifice that Southam folks made.

One of the things we would like to produce is a "Roll of Honour" commemorating everyone who served. However this information is surprisingly difficult to find, there being no single source for it. We would hate to omit any names from the list, so if you had Southam relatives who served during World War I please let Val know. New information is coming to light all the time, even after all these years, and if you have anything you think might be relevant (photos, documents, certificates, items etc), no matter how little, Val would be delighted to hear about it. Please call in to Vivian House on Tuesday mornings between 10am and 12 noon, or if you are unable to do so, please contact us direct via telephone or email.



Membership Subs / Donations

Membership subscriptions became due on 1st October. Now that we have become a Charity and changed our name to Southam Heritage Collection, we have a new bank account.

Please make any subscription and/or donation payments to:

Account (Lloyds): **Southam Heritage Collection**
Sort Code: **30 99 13**
Account Number: **31344868**

Subscriptions are £20 for a joint membership, £15 for an individual, and £5 each for the Over 70s and those in full time education.



General Information:

Southam Heritage Collection belongs to the people of Southam. It is managed by Trustees and a Committee. Membership of the group is open to anyone with an interest in the history of Southam and the surrounding area. If you would like to find out how you can support our work, please telephone either the Chairman, Bernard on 01926 613503 or Secretary Linda on 01926 814214. Alternatively, you can email us on: southamheritage@hotmail.com or message us via our Facebook page "Southam Heritage Collection". (If you are a Facebook user, please 'Like' our page and share our posts to help spread the word.)

Visiting the Collection at Vivian House, Market Hill:

We are open on Tuesday mornings between 10am and 12 noon. When our exhibitions are on, we also open on Saturday mornings. We can open at other times by arrangement. Please note access to the Vivian House basement is via stairs, so may be difficult for those with restricted mobility. If you would like to arrange a private visit, please contact Bernard on 01926 613503

Volunteering, Membership, Donations:

If you would like to join the group please contact us and we will send you an application form. The form includes a Gift Aid Declaration that taxpayers are asked to sign to enable us to reclaim the tax you have paid on your subscription or donation. Membership is renewable on 1st October each year. Donations are welcome at any time! Cheques should be made payable to 'Southam Heritage Collection' or paid direct to our Lloyds Account Sort Code: 30 99 13 Account No: 31344868. You can also donate online at mydonate.bt.com

Southam "Walk and Talk":

A short guided tour of Southam on level footpaths to see some of its most interesting buildings, and hear something about their history, followed by an opportunity for tea and chat at a town centre venue. Available for groups of up to a maximum of 20 people, the Walk and Talk lasts in total about 2 hours and costs £5 per person. Contact: Linda on 01926 814214.

Presentations, Talks, Exhibitions:

We can attend one of your group meetings or visit your premises and give a presentation and talk about aspects of Southam's history tailored to your interests. Contact Bernard on 01926 613503 or Linda on 01926 814214 to discuss your requirements. (A fee will be charged by agreement.) If you have any artefacts, documents or photographs that you would be prepared to loan for one of our forthcoming exhibitions (see Newsletter for details), we would love to hear from you.

Events & Festivals:

If you would like us to have a stall at your event or festival please contact Jenny on 01926 814643

200 Club:

Tickets cost just £5 per annum, and your number is entered into a monthly draw. The prize is £10 each month, increasing substantially in November and May depending on the number of tickets sold. All proceeds go to help with our running costs. Enquiries to Jenny on 01926 814643

Copies of Photographs:

We have a growing archive of photographs of Old Southam and surrounding area. Copies are available to purchase. All enquiries to Bernard on 01926 613503

*Thank you for reading this Newsletter.
Please feel free to pass it on to your friends, relations and colleagues.*