

Southam Heritage Collection

Tithe Place Community Rooms, High Street, Southam CV47 0HB

NEWSLETTER

No 23: Summer 2019



Chairman's Update

It is now just over 12 months since we moved into our new permanent home in Tithe Place and what a year it has been. Yes, there have been all the usual problems one would expect in moving into a new home, some were expected, and some were not (like leaks from a bathroom in a flat above), but the best news of all was the fantastic impact the move has had on the number of people who are now coming to visit our exhibitions and see for themselves some of the history of Southam.

Over the course of the year we have seen a four-fold increase in the number of visitors and what we would have regarded as a good day in terms of visitor numbers at Vivian House would now be regarded as a very poor day. In the first part of 2019 our Fire Service exhibition attracted in excess of 1,000 visitors, including several keen fire service enthusiasts from outside the town. This Fire Service exhibition was helped enormously by some very generous loans provided by Andy Duckett and Mike Hill from their own collections.



There are now no issues in terms of accessibility given our ground floor location and we are also immediately visible to anyone visiting the Library or the Café in Tithe Place so many more people who were previously unaware of the Collection cannot fail to notice us. In addition, we have two large windows, one facing the Atrium and one external

which we are putting to full use with frequently changing displays.

At the end of 2018 following the success of the last WW1 Commemorative Exhibition, we mounted a special short exhibition featuring the photos used in our 2019 Calendar – these displays provided additional information on each scene sponsored in the Calendar as well as providing an opportunity for people to take part in our Christmas raffle.

In May we unveiled our “Playtimes Past” exhibition featuring toys and games from the 1950's and 60's many of which were treasured possessions loaned by Southam residents. There are also several games which visitors, including children, are encouraged to try their skill, or luck with.



Our increased visibility has led to a number of new volunteers coming forward to help with staffing our extended opening hours, digitising the collection and reopening our oral history work.

If you would like to see some of the many opportunities we have for volunteers to help with running the Collection please take a look at our website on the Volunteering page under “Getting Involved” which gives a very comprehensive list of areas where you could help together with a brief description of what skills might be involved. Equally please feel free to drop in and discuss your thoughts with us and we will be delighted to show you behind the scenes and flesh out how you could help. We really would welcome your involvement.

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.

"Playtimes Past"

Thank you so much to all our members who have loaned their special toys to this exhibition. Displayed alongside those from the Collection and others loaned by Paul Catterall, so we have finished up with a very thought provoking and interactive exhibition that people are just loving to wander round.

Curated by Linda, she can accept that this year is Noddy's 70th birthday, but she is finding it difficult to accept that this year is also Barbie's 60th birthday. Oh my goodness! But she is not the only one and to eavesdrop on conversations between different family generations is quite fascinating, especially when you realise how different today's younger generation is when it comes to toys.

200 Club

Once again we are running our 200 Club Draw to help raise funds to support the Collection. Every three months we have to pay a four-figure service charge for the two rooms in Tithe Place. Grants can be obtained for purchasing specific items of equipment but contributions to help with ongoing costs are always more difficult to find.

We have various events where we try to raise this money including Coffee Mornings, street collections, sale of Calendars, Cards and other items. However, one of the biggest contributors towards these costs is the 200 Club where for £5 per year supporters can buy a ticket for 12 monthly draws. There is a £10 prize each month and twice a year in November and May a much larger prize based on the number of tickets sold. This year we have once again been very successful in that 191 people have bought tickets so far and are entered in the draw each month. It's not too late even now to buy a ticket for the remaining 10 months of this year's draw – you can do this by contacting Pam McConnell on 01926 814923. Why not buy one for your son or daughter, or even a grandchild?

Town Centre Events

Being in Tithe Place has made it so much easier to be open when other town centre events are on, but we are still limited to when the cafe is open, because we are unable to independently lock and unlock the front doors for public access! The cafe shuts each day at 4 pm, which means that at the weekend we can only remain open until 4 o'clock even if a town event goes on longer, although we can always have an organised private group visit after that time.

We decided against opening for the early May Bank Holiday as the event was only on at the top

of town and instead we took a stall space with children's games, which was excellent for publicity. However, on the late May Bank Holiday for Carnival Day, we opened from lunchtime until 4 o'clock and had a continuous trickle of visitors to and from the recreation ground.

Last year's Retro event was postponed due to bad weather until June 2nd and although the weather was not at its best with some light rain, we still achieved our first event with 100 visitors clocked in!

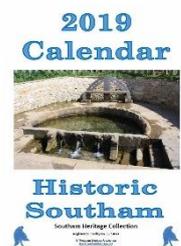
Having had successful town walks with German exchange students and Southam College, when their first exchange group of Spanish students arrived, they asked for and were given the same historical walk, which although done on a busy Tuesday morning, we did manage to arrange. With our new exhibition room it was so much easier to finish our walk here.

We supported Southam in Bloom over the whole Open Gardens weekend in July and were amazed when one visitor arrived from Walsall with her family history to ask about her old Harbury relatives. Visitors ranged from those coming in for the first time, to regulars enjoying a quick look while wandering round Southam's glorious gardens and intending to return on a less busy day.

We are looking forward to being open during the town's Food Festival on September 15th, doing town walks alongside St James' Church which will be open and doing refreshments on September 20th for Heritage Open Days (HODs) and on the 21st continuing our town walks alongside our "Playtimes Past" exhibition and when the Library has a display of local writers. We will be doing one of the pre-Book Fair talks on the evening of October 8th in the Library as well as attending the Book Fair at the Graham Adams Centre on the afternoon of October 20th. Once again we are attending the John Turner Festival at Southam College on November 2nd and this year we will be presenting interactive items from our toy exhibition.

2020 Calendar

Even though we are in the middle of summer (I think) we have been working hard on plans for Christmas and 2020. Part of these plans involves designing next year's calendar since it needs to go to the printers in early August to be ready for sale later in the year. We have had a fantastic response from local businesses with some very generous contributions and now have only one page remaining for sponsorship, due to a business moving away from Southam. We hope we have a sponsor lined up but if you are interested in sponsoring this last page please get in contact with us asap.



New Acquisitions

One of Southam's most active volunteer and fundraising groups is the Lions. Southam Lions raise funds for a variety of causes, including the



Heritage Collection, throughout the year and have a great deal of fun in the process. This year they have donated their 12-volume archive, recording the history of the Lions, to the Collection for safe keeping and also so that local people can consult it and look back at photographs and articles describing many of the activities. As more records are added it is the intention of the Lions to lodge further volumes of these archives with the Collection. Val Steele is currently using the archives to write a future "Cardall's Corner" article and others may want to consider whether they could use them for a similar purpose. We are always interested in meeting new writers for "Cardall's Corner". The archives and some other records are available for consultation on Friday mornings during normal opening hours.

Volunteer Recognition

Our volunteers have put in many, many hours of hard work over 13 years now and we were delighted when founder member and Trustee Rowan Parker's contribution to the Collection was honoured when he won the Individual Creative and Heritage Volunteer Award at the Warwickshire



Community and Voluntary Action (WCAVA) evening in June of this year. Rowan is shown receiving his award at the event. Shortly afterwards he also received a letter of congratulations from local MP Jeremy Wright. Well done Rowan.

Finances & Grants

We have had several problems with heating (too much) and ventilation (not enough) in the Tithe Place rooms. In particular the Project Room where we keep the Collection and do a lot of behind the scenes work suffers from massive south facing double glazed windows. We applied for a grant for blinds for these windows and Warwickshire County Councillor Andy Crump generously provided a major contribution towards the costs of installing these blinds from his WCC Councillor Grant fund. Thank you, Andy.



Cardall's Corner

Each month the District Advertiser kindly publishes a "Cardall's Corner" article featuring some aspect of local history and we know from feedback that many people look forward to reading this article each month.

If you fancy trying your hand at writing a short article for inclusion in the "Cardall's Corner" series, please get in touch to discuss your ideas. We can provide photographs to accompany articles and research opportunities utilising the Collection if you need them. Several people are already working on future articles and full credit will be given when the articles are published both in the District Advertiser and on our web site. We would love to have even more new authors.

Other Activities

On the first and third Wednesday morning of each month we have been host for the Knightlow Civil War Group in our Project Room. This group has been working together with a larger Warwickshire group to translate Warwickshire 17th C Civil War Loss Account records. The result of which will be various talks plus exhibition display banners which we will be showing in our windows.

On the same subject we have a grant to reprint our "Battle of Southam 1642" book, and our joint members and Southam Ramblers walk on Wednesday October 2nd will take in Radway village and the church's Civil War display.

Window Displays

The atrium and outside Tithe Place windows both feature different mini-displays to the main exhibition. The idea being they change every few weeks and include when possible, topical subjects. It is therefore worth keeping your eyes open when passing.

The atrium window has seen displays organised by local history groups and persons, which have ranged from Long Itchington village photographs, local tradesmen, Marton Museum and the latest are some superb photos of the moon landing from 50 years ago loaned by Len Gale. Future displays will include Southam Twinning and WW2.

The outside window has seen selections of WW2 and fire brigade posters from our exhibitions and currently features where and what Southam's 'tithe barn' was. These boards will change alongside banners on loan from Warwickshire Museum. This front window also has a notice board for posters on local historical events around the area, so do have a look to see what's going on.



General Information:

Southam Heritage Collection belongs to the people of Southam. It incorporates the Cardall Collection, the Alan Griffin photographic archive and other items donated by local people. 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 or call in to see us when we are open. 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.)

Exhibition Opening Times at Tithe Place, High Street, Southam:

We are located in Southam Town Centre and our exhibition room is in the main atrium of Tithe Place opposite the Library entrance. We are open on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday mornings between 10am and 12 noon. We can open at other times by arrangement. If you would like to arrange a private or group visit outside normal opening times, 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 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 without charge by designating SHC as your chosen charity at Smile Amazon.

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 we would love to hear from you.

200 Club:

Tickets cost just £5 per annum and you can join at any time provided we have not reached the 200 Club membership limit. Your number is allocated randomly and 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 Pam on 01926 814923

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.*