

Southam Heritage Collection

Tithe Place, High St, Southam 01926 613503 Registered Charity No 1173033



NEWSLETTER

No 27: Spring / Summer 2021

Chairman's Update

Little did I think back in March 2020, when we had to close down our Police Service Exhibition that we would still be closed over twelve months later.

Although there have been brief periods of respite it has been a daunting period for everyone, being forced to halt our usual activities. In some ways we have been extremely lucky, with Stratford District Council waiving the rent for our rooms in Tithe Place, and all of you and the businesses in Southam continuing to support us through the 200 Club, sponsorship, and purchase of our Calendar, greeting cards and local history books. I would like to thank everyone for this support, we are incredibly grateful for it.

As I write (early May) we are busy making preparations to reopen our rooms, firstly as a shop and then as a full Exhibition focussing on Southam in the immediate post WW2 years. However it will take time to return to normal. In terms of visitors, we have lost the benefit of the Tuesday market and the people it brought into the town, but we may yet be surprised. Hopefully the vaccination programme will 'put the lid' on the virus and allow us all to get on with whatever the new normal turns out to be.

One of the interesting things during the pandemic lockdown has been the number of requests received for copies of our local history books, including some from overseas. Although this hasn't made up in money terms for the loss of revenue it has been very encouraging for our volunteers and proves there is an audience out there for our work.

In addition, we have made several contacts with people living in different parts of the UK who have offered significant new archival material. I am eagerly awaiting the lifting of the remaining pandemic restrictions to allow me to travel down to Bath to collect and then copy a significant set of material relating to the Southam WW2 Airfield site, more on this later in the year.

Our work has not ceased completely over the past year and if you do go into the Library, please take a moment to look at our Atrium and High Street

windows. There are new items, posters and stories on display. We are trying to do the best we can to keep Southam's history alive, and we hope you will not be disappointed.

New Exhibition: 'After the War'

We were delighted to be able to open our Exhibition Room in Tithe Place from May 6th. Initially, we can only open as a shop on Thursday, Friday and Saturday mornings, 10 till 12 noon. We will be slowly introducing our 2021 Exhibition under the umbrella title of 'After the War' featuring stories about how Southam has changed since 1945.

How SOUTHAM has changed

Peace

'After the War'
From 1945 onwards

Southam Heritage Collection

What was before Wood Street Car Park, the Library & Tithe Place?
Did you go to the new High School?
How much to buy a house in 1975?

Southam Heritage Collection's 2021 Summer exhibition in Tithe Place

COMING SOON

We start with a large aerial map of Southam c.1950 in the atrium window, when the town was considerably smaller than it is today.

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 is housed at Tithe Place in the centre of Southam, where it can be displayed, used and appreciated by the general public, local history societies, schools, reminiscence groups and researchers.

When the Covid guidelines permit we will be featuring other aspects of the development of Southam in the Post-WW2 era. For example, the opening of Southam's new schools, and displays about what was there before the Wood Street car park, the supermarket on Oxford Street, the Stowe Drive housing estate and Tithe Place itself. Many of the posters will be supported by video. Later on the display cabinets will feature interesting artefacts from the era, and the aviation story of the Captain who lived at The Grange after the war.

National Service Memories

Did you, or someone you know serve in HM Forces as part of National Service? We are currently compiling a collection of memories and documents from those who were called up after World War 2. If you would like to contribute to the discussion and/or chat to us about your own experiences during National Service, please do get in touch.

Tithe Place Update

We have had a few problems with our Tithe Place rooms since we relocated there in 2018. These have mainly been focussed on excessive heat, lack of ventilation or cooling, doors, water leaks etc.

We initially tried to resolve these problems via a series of meetings, first with the builder's snagging manager and then with both Orbit's local and Head Office managers. Progress has been agonisingly slow, with several false starts, often due to Orbit personnel changes. We thought we were making headway to resolving the issues, but in the end, very little happened.

Last year a new local manager was appointed at Tithe Place and we had a very good meeting with him. Then the lockdown started, and all communications ceased, with everyone at Orbit management working from home.

In April this year we wrote directly to the CEO of Orbit and again it appeared our pleas were falling on deaf ears. However, after several weeks we received a phone call from Orbit's head office in Coventry from a new building manager. After a very pleasant call we arranged an onsite meeting to show her all the issues we were trying to get resolved. In addition, Tithe Place's new local manager, (who had recently been appointed,) came along and we were able to describe our concerns in detail to both of them.

Right now we are waiting for the building manager to have further meetings with her head office colleagues and then we hope things will finally begin to move.

Unfortunately I cannot report any significant progress yet, but having met the new managers I am hopeful that we will see some progress in the not too distant future. I will keep you informed.

Apart from these issues, the rooms in Tithe Place continue to serve us very well. We are ideally positioned in the centre of town, and in normal circumstances, benefit from plenty of footfall to the Library and Café.



Membership: One Price for All?

For some years the SHC Committee has been considering whether or not we should raise membership subscriptions. Our income from subs has gradually fallen, even though our membership numbers have increased slightly. The reason for this is that most of our members are long-standing supporters and are now over 70. This means they only pay the minimum £5 per annum subscription instead of the 'normal' adult price of £15.

The older generation (rightly or wrongly) is deemed by many to be in a better position financially than most of the younger generation. Therefore at this year's AGM we will be proposing that we simplify our membership process and change our subscription to a flat rate of £10 per person per annum, regardless of age. If the proposal is adopted, the new flat rate £10 sub will apply from 1st October 2021.

We realise this could be a contentious issue, so we are asking you to consider whether you think the proposal is fair, and give us some feedback as soon as possible (ie in advance of the September AGM).

In addition, if you have any suggestions on how we could increase membership and make it more attractive to the wider Southam population, we would love to hear from you.

2022 Heritage Calendar

Last year, despite being closed for most of the year, we sold more calendars than for the previous year. This is remarkable, and tells us that the appeal of the heritage calendar is undiminished. We will therefore be searching out another set of photographs to use for the 2022 calendar very shortly.

Our calendar is a major fund-raiser for us, because most of the production costs are covered by our very generous business sponsors. Also our friends at Southam Post Office stock the calendar so they are still available to buy when the museum is closed. They then pass on 100% of the sale price to us.

If you would like to have your business featured on a page of our calendar, do please get in touch.

New Range of Cards for Sale

Over the past four years, our annual Christmas card has proved to be a popular addition to the merchandise we sell from the Exhibition room. Sales of cards now make a significant contribution to our fundraising effort.



We have decided to expand our range to include more non-seasonal cards, blank for your own message, that are all produced from paintings by local artists (including our Treasurer, Pam McConnell).

The cards feature both local scenes and popular subjects and are very reasonably priced at £1.20 each.



These cards are available exclusively from us, and all proceeds go to help pay our overheads. If you

are looking to buy local (and support a local charity!) we hope you will come along and see what we have to offer.

Money Matters

(Update from our Treasurer)

As mentioned in the Chairman's Update, I was able to negotiate with Stratford District Council for a waiver of our quarterly rent at Tithe Place during lockdown. This rent relief amounted to over £6,000 and has proved to be a lifeline for us. Income from donations, Gift Aid and merchandise sales dropped considerably during the months we were closed. With no museum open, and no visitors, we made far fewer sales and received very few donations. Also we were unable to hold any walks or talks, coffee mornings, street collections, or attend any events, fairs or markets to sell our publications and merchandise.

However, the 200 Club was very well supported last year, Calendar sales increased, and Linda Doyle's new book about the Deserted villages around Ladbroke proved very popular.

On our Chairman's recommendation, (and after careful research,) we took the decision in early 2020 to invest a significant portion of our reserve funds with a long established investment company that deals solely with Charities and Local Authorities. This has proved to be a wise decision, with our fund having increased at a much better rate than it would have done if left in the bank earning only pennies in interest.

I am therefore pleased to report that our Balance Sheet remains healthy. We have to start paying rent again from the next quarter day on 24th June. However, with the predicted pandemic 'bounce back' and people being more aware generally of the importance of their locality and community, hopefully we can look forward to the future with confidence.

Cardall's Corner

Our Cardall's Corners are printed in the Southam edition of the District Advertiser, and then posted on our website. From feedback received, we know that many people appreciate these monthly articles on a local heritage theme. It is really pleasing when we receive appreciation and additional input from our readers.

Sometimes this feedback comes in the form of comments submitted on the web page containing the article, and other times via an email to the Collection. Of course, we also get many people who read the printed copy and pass back verbal

comments. Very often readers can provide substantial additional input which we had not been aware of. So please if you have any comments or information relating to the articles send us your input whichever way suits you best. We will be delighted to receive it.

We now have a compilation of older articles available to buy in booklet form, and will be preparing a second volume during 2021.

New authors and ideas for the articles are always welcome. If you would like to contribute an article related to Southam's history that might be of interest to the general public, please do get in touch. As soon as we can re-open fully, members may also come into the museum and research a topic that interests them using our archives.

Museum Accreditation

The UK Arts Council Museum Accreditation Scheme is the industry standard for museums and art galleries, ensuring they are properly run, sustainably managed, and provide what their users want.

For some time now, we have been working towards meeting those standards so that Southam Heritage can become an officially accredited museum. Moving to a public room in Tithe Place has helped us considerably as regards accessibility as a museum, together with the consequent development of risk assessments, volunteer agreements and health and safety policies. Of course, we are now also a Registered Charity.

Last year we were approached by a new volunteer, (Olivia Sandhu,) who is studying at Warwick University. After discussing her interests, she agreed to take on the project of applying for Accreditation for the Collection. By January this year she was well on the way to putting together the information, and bringing to our attention anything that we may still need to do.

Hopefully, by the end of this year we should be able to put forward a request for Museum Accreditation. Accredited museums gain more credibility, and are often looked upon more favourably in terms of obtaining grant funding.

200 Club - Time to Renew

The final draw of the current lottery takes place at the end of May – and it's for the bonus prize of £50! Good luck to all our ticket holders.

This means it is now time to start inviting members to renew their 200 Club tickets for another year. The 200 Club is a great way to support us and also

have the chance of winning a cash prize every month. You can buy as many tickets as you like, and we are keeping the ticket price the same as in previous years (£5 per ticket per annum).

A reminder has been sent, and if you renew by 1st June, you can keep your existing numbers. Full information about how to renew is available on the southamheritage.org website (click on Getting Involved, 200 Club and download the form), or you can simply email us with your requirements and pay us by internet banking or Standing Order.

We do hope that all our current 200 Club members will continue to want to take part in the monthly draw. We look forward to hearing from you – you have to be in it to win it!



Southam Timeline Project

For some time we have been considering how best to record and permanently display the most significant aspects of Southam's history.

We feel that people new to Southam, or even those who have lived here for some time, may appreciate an easy-to-follow guide to the important events and developments that shaped our town. For example, these would include its early roots, its involvement in national events, its significant characters and buildings, and its transport systems and trades.

We do sell an excellent book about Southam written by the late Brian Townsend (former Librarian) called 'Southam Through the Centuries'. The magnificent 'Southam Embroideries' panels displayed at the Grange Hall also provide visual reference points for 6 aspects of the town's development. We offer a talk to interested groups titled 'The Shaping of Southam'. However, we would like to present the town's history in a more permanent, visible, user-friendly form, within the museum itself.

To that end, the Committee has agreed to proceed with the production of a Timeline display. It will take the form of a chronological 'quick reference' of how the town has evolved over the years, with additional material being supplied in booklet form for those who wish to delve deeper.

This project will take some time to come to fruition, but we have started the planning, and we already have funding allocated from a memorial donation received several years ago. Whatever form the display eventually takes, we hope it will increase everyone's understanding of the town's evolution. We look forward to presenting it in early 2022.



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 is open to anyone with an interest in the history of Southam and the surrounding area. If you would like to discuss 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 visit our website www.southamheritage.org email us on: southamheritage@hotmail.com or message us via our Facebook page. (If you are a Facebook user, please 'Like' and follow our page and share our posts to help spread the word.)

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

Our exhibition room is in the main atrium of Tithe Place, High Street opposite the Library entrance. During the coronavirus pandemic lockdown, we were closed. However, we re-opened in May 2021 on Thursday, Friday and Saturday mornings from 10am to 12 noon. As soon as Covid guidelines permit, we will be presenting exhibitions again, but in the meantime we do have two large exterior windows with heritage displays that are regularly updated.

Volunteering, Membership, Donations:

If you would like to become a member of the group please contact us and we will send you an application form. Once a member, you could then let us know if you are able to volunteer any time or skills, but please note, volunteering is not compulsory. The application form includes a Gift Aid Declaration that will 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. Please also nominate SHC as your chosen charity when buying online through Smile Amazon, and we will receive a small donation from Amazon (at no cost to you) every time you shop.

Southam "Walk and Talk":

We can organise 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. Normally 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 donation will be requested, 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:

Our 200 Club lottery runs from June to May each year. Tickets cost just £5 per annum and you can join at any time. Your numbers are entered into a monthly draw. The cash 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 our Treasurer, Pam on 01926 814923

Cards, Merchandise, Photographs and Prints:

We have a growing archive of photographs of Old Southam and surrounding area, and copies are available to purchase. We also sell various other items to raise funds, including greetings cards, calendars, a range of local history and second hand books and other merchandise.

Thank you for reading this Newsletter.

Please feel free to pass it on to your friends, relatives and colleagues.



Southam Heritage Collection

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

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / DONATION FORM / GIFT AID DECLARATION

Full Name:
(please print)

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

I would like to become a member of the Southam Heritage Collection OR renew my annual Membership, and I enclose herewith my subscription.
(Current annual subs are: £15 for individuals, £20 for a couple, £5 each for the over 70s)
I would like to donate the following amount to support the objectives of the Southam Heritage Collection.

£

£

Signed:

Date:

Please return this form with your payment to the Treasurer: Pam McConnell, 19 Tattle Bank, Southam CV47 1NU. Cheques should be made payable to: Southam Heritage Collection. Payments by internet banking or standing order to: **Lloyds Account Sort Code: 30 99 13 Account No: 31344868 Ref: (your name).**

Membership is renewable on 1st October each year. Many thanks for your support.

Please tick this box if you require a receipt:

GIFT AID DECLARATION



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If you pay Income Tax, Southam Heritage Collection can claim back the tax you have paid on your subscriptions and donations. In order for us to claim this tax back, please complete the following Gift Aid Declaration:

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money

today in the past 4 years in the future

Please tick all boxes you wish to apply, and sign the Declaration below.

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6 April 2008.

Signed: Date:

Please notify the charity or CASC if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

Note: If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.