

The Friends of the Cardall Collection

NEWSLETTER

No 8: Spring 2011



Ken Graham



February this year brought the devastating news that one of our founder members, Ken Graham, had died of a heart attack. In true Ken style it happened during one of the local group meetings that were such a feature of his life.

Ken had been attempting to secure the future of the Cardall Collection for many years and it was at the third attempt in 2005 that his efforts were rewarded. However Ken was never content with just starting things off. Although he did not want to lead the group he was a valuable and active FoCC Management Committee member and played a very active role.

Ken provided wise counsel, information, and connections to both people and other organisations. He gave his time and energy unstintingly and preserving the Collection for the benefit of the Town was one of his most passionate concerns.

Having just come through several debilitating, but unrelated illnesses Ken had recently expressed a wish to get more actively involved again. Unfortunately this was not to be. All of the Management Committee will miss Ken greatly for his enthusiasm, knowledge and commitment. Our sincere condolences and best wishes go to his wife Jacky and family.

Chairman's Update

In January we started our third year at The Old Labour Exchange in Warwick Road. This means we are approaching the middle of our 5-year lease, and despite our best efforts we have not yet found a permanent home for the Collection. Much effort has gone into keeping in touch with people and organisations that might be able to help.

In the Autumn of 2010 there was a flurry of activity when the plans for redeveloping our Town Centre were resurrected. A series of meetings were held between the various landowners and stakeholders, but these collapsed when Warwickshire Police Authority decided to retain their Southam offices.

However, we remain in regular contact with Stratford District Council who will take the lead in any plans involving the Town Centre, in particular with Katherine Geddes, who has been extremely helpful. She has facilitated visits to the OLE by Jennie Ellard, one of Southam's District Councillors, and David Webb, who has taken over responsibility for Strategy at Stratford DC.

On a brighter note, we are still making progress with our projects, and a number of new opportunities have arisen. Read more about them later in this Newsletter.

Please remember we need to find a permanent home for the Collection in Southam, and we need all the help we can get to find one. So do keep your eyes and ears open!

Open House Wednesdays

We would like to invite you to take a look inside the Old Labour Exchange building and see what The Friends have been doing there since we moved in over two years ago.

As an experiment this summer you will be able to drop in and take a look around on **the first Wednesday of the month between 2pm and 4pm** starting on Wednesday 4th May. We will show you around and be happy to discuss any aspects of the Friends' work that interests you.

Space is very limited – so please don't all turn up at once! Our normal documentation team will be hard at work, with another member of the Friends on hand to welcome visitors. If these open afternoons become popular we will increase the number of sessions. Look forward to seeing you!

Southam's Cardall Collection is a collection of artefacts, documents, photographs and memorabilia associated with Southam and its history. Started by the late Mr Jack Cardall, its custodian was Mrs Irene Cardal until her death in 2007. The County Museum Service inspectors agree that it is an important record of the life and times of our market town. The Collection urgently needs a permanent home in Southam where it can be displayed to the public, used and appreciated by local history societies, schools, reminiscence groups and researchers.

The Alan Griffin Collection

Towards the end of 2010 we were delighted when Alan Griffin, a local historian, offered to donate his archive of photographic negatives, slides and other items relating to Southam.

Alan who was brought up in Southam, had long been a friend of Rene Cardall, and was involved in some of the early meetings to set up the Friends of the Cardall Collection.

Alan has collected photographs of old Southam for many years and a number have been used in his published books. He decided the time was now right to donate his archive to the Cardall Collection. This is a fantastic gift and recognises the growing confidence in our ability to preserve the Collection for posterity. There are about 1,200 photos and slides together with many copies of newspaper articles relating to the town.



The Friends were successful in applying for a small grant to buy a film scanner and other equipment (see photo). We can now scan and 'capture' all the negatives and slides electronically and store them on our PC. This makes the photos more widely accessible and will ensure that good quality printed copies can be made.

Glynis Powell, Warwickshire Community Museums Officer, arranged for two members of the Friends Committee to visit the Warwickshire Archives office to learn how best to digitise the archive. Work has now started and to date about one third of the negatives have been scanned and indexed. If anyone is interested in participating in this project please get in touch.

FoCC at Compton Verney

At Compton Verney there is an internationally renowned Art Gallery and this year they will be displaying two items from the Cardall Collection. Over the winter Compton Verney selected twenty items to be displayed as part of their "What the Folk Say" exhibition. The items will be displayed alongside the Compton Verney collection until December 11th 2011. The first of our items is a small heart-shaped cushion embroidered by a Southam soldier in the trenches during the First World War. The second item is a set of three bamboo pipes made by Southam school children during the early part of the twentieth century. Why

not go along to Compton Verney and see if you can spot our items?

Abbey Lane on TV

If you have been along Warwick Road and past Abbey Green recently you may have noticed that the house at No1 Abbey Lane has been swathed in plastic sheeting and is a hive of activity. Most of the brickwork has been removed and the fascinating wooden framework, both inside and outside, has been revealed. The house is being totally renovated to put it back into as near its original condition as possible, subject to modern building regulations.

The whole process is being filmed by a TV company and the Cardall Collection has been helping the company's research team find out as much as possible about the house and its former owners. One of the TV Company's researchers has visited Southam a number of times and has met with members of the Cardall Collection to look at items that could help in the making of the TV programme. The plan is that the house, which will take most of this year to renovate, will feature in a programme to be screened in the first half of 2012.



In the picture you can see the Friends Chairman with a TV company researcher outside the Manor House (Southam Pharmacy) - we took her on a tour to show her some of the interesting sights in the town. Will the Collection appear in the programme when it goes on air? Well, we'll just have to wait and see.

VIP Visitors

We are always trying to keep the Collection in the public eye and a number of local dignitaries have been invited to visit the Old Labour Exchange over the past twelve months. Back in September 2010 the Mayor, Councillor Jane Soni, and her deputy, Andy Crump, came along to see for themselves the progress being made in documenting and looking after all the items. Cllr Soni was fascinated to see all that had been achieved, and shortly afterwards donated a very interesting object to the Collection (see following article).



Jennie Ellard, one of Southam's Stratford District Councillors visited the Old Labour Exchange with Katherine Geddes (on the right) earlier in the year. Jennie was keen to understand the issues faced by the Collection and how these relate to the plans for the revitalisation of the Town Centre.



David Webb, Stratford District Council, (now responsible for Southam following the departure of Trevor Askew,) visited the Old Labour Exchange at the end of March and we briefed him on the part the Collection could play in revitalising the Town.

procession. Below the two figures are the dates "1843 – 1973" and parts of two wheels. We assume this is meant to depict a carnival float because immediately below the 'float' there is the inscription: Floats 3rd.

Our guess, based on only the information on the plaque, is that it was presented to the float winning third prize in the 1973 Southam Carnival procession. It has been suggested that the years 1843 – 1973 refer to the period during which the Southam Rural District Council was in existence. Are we correct? And if we are which float won this amazing plaque, and what could the Second and First prizes have been?

Someone in Southam must be able to tell us more about it – 1973 is not that long ago and there are many people still living in the Town who were here in 1973. Can you help us? Please send any thoughts to cardallcollection@hotmail.co.uk or phone Bernard Cadogan on 01926 613503.

Mystery Object from 1973

In our first ever Newsletter we asked readers if they could identify a mystery object from the Collection. The challenge proved difficult because we knew nothing about the object, or even what it was meant to be. This time, we are confident that a number of you will be able to help.

After her recent visit to the OLE, Southam's Mayor, Jane Soni, donated a magnificent plaque to the Cardall Collection. It is solid metal, about 19 inches high by 15 inches wide, and very heavy. On the back are two brackets to thread wire through for hanging it.

Cardall's Corner

Do you read the Southam Advertiser magazine each month? Since December they have published our small "Cardall's Corner" articles. Each month we write a short (~200 word) article on a topical subject and its connection to items in the Collection. It is intended to give readers a taster of what we have, so do watch out for it. Many thanks to the District Advertisers for very kindly allowing us to publish the article each month without charge.



The scroll at the bottom reads "Southam Godiva Carnival". In the centre is a shield showing Brazen Face leading Lady Godiva as if in a

The Old Labour Exchange

Last winter the country had some of the coldest weather for quite a few years, and the Old Labour Exchange did not escape Jack Frost.

We have had frozen pipes and water leaks in both previous Winters, with water pouring through the wooden floors. Last Winter, anticipating more problems, we placed some paving stones where the water supply enters the building to keep the worst of the frost away. We also insulated the roof space to keep it a bit warmer inside, and save some money on the electricity bills.



Despite our precautions the water meter burst yet again, but because it was less dramatic than in previous years we did not spot it until mid-March! It took many phone calls and nearly two weeks to have Severn Trent fix the problem. Eventually they did, and dug holes in the pavement to replace the external stop tap.

However, another problem has arisen. On entering the roof space to insulate it, we discovered a large crack has opened up in the asbestos roof which is several feet long and an inch or two wide. Fortunately it is under the ridge tiles so unless the rain strikes the building horizontally we should not get water into the building. However the building is obviously moving (we also had to plane the bottom of the door again in order to open it).

The building's age and fragility is a constant and growing concern.

Southam Fire Service Project

This year we are building on the success of our association with the Fire Service and are taking part in another **Southam's Fire Station Open Day on Saturday 9th July.**

In the week before this we are once again running workshops for the three Southam Primary Schools. In these workshops the children will learn something of the history of Southam, and the important role played by the Volunteer Fire Service. We are really pleased that these workshops will take place at the Fire Station itself. The children will be able to see at first hand fire service artefacts from the Cardall Collection and contrast them with the 'high tech' equipment used today.

We are also in the process of putting together a Fire Service Talk which we will be able to take out to local groups. This will make good use of our laptop and data projection equipment, and hopefully also generate some income.



Environmental Monitoring

Given our building's problems, maybe monitoring the temperature and humidity is a bit of a waste of time! However understanding how the temperature and humidity are fluctuating is very important when it comes to keeping old and fragile items in good condition.

It is not necessary to keep items particularly warm, although we do have low level background heating in the storage area. It is important, however, to keep them dry and to prevent frequent fluctuations in humidity. It is equally important to check that there are no creepy-crawlies feasting away quietly on the Collection!

We have been participating in some work led by the Warwickshire Museum's Service to monitor the environment within the Old Labour Exchange. With the assistance of Glynis Powell we have installed a small monitoring device in the storage area together with a number of insect 'traps'. It is early days yet but we are waiting for the results of our first monitoring period and will be looking through the CD given to us by Glynis to identify "Who is eating your Collection?"

We have been awarded a small grant to help buy our own equipment to continue the monitoring programme and then we will be able to make decisions about any changes needed to improve the way we store particularly delicate items.

If you are interested in creepy-crawlies or you would like to help with this monitoring programme we would be delighted to speak with you – it will take up very little of your time. Please telephone Bernard on 01926 613503.

Making the Collection More Accessible

"Walk and Talk" Events

We can now offer small groups the opportunity to hear a short presentation about the history of the Cardall Collection and then take a guided walk around Southam to view some of its most interesting locations. It is an easy walk with paved surfaces throughout, and the whole event takes about 2 hours.

The cost of a 'Walk and Talk' is £5 per person, with a minimum of 8 persons and a maximum of 12. (We may be able to accommodate larger groups in two 'shifts', if necessary.) The price includes a cup of tea/coffee, and a chance for an informal chat and a closer look at the exhibits on display after the event.

To find out more, please contact Bernard on 01926 613503 or Linda on 01926 814214.

Presentations and Talks for Local Groups

We now have the necessary technology to give illustrated talks to any local groups who are interested in the history of Southam and the items in the Cardall Collection. If you would like us to come along and give a talk to your group, club or society, please contact Bernard on 01926 613503 or Linda on 01926 814214. A fee will be charged by agreement.

Displays & Workshops

On the final page of this Newsletter there is a list of the local events we will be taking part in during 2011. This includes our Open House afternoons on the first Wednesday of the month from May to September.

Because of the restricted space within the Old Labour Exchange, (and the terms of our lease,) we are not able to open it to the public.

However, for a small donation, we can invite groups to visit our HQ and view the permanent display we have put together. We can also arrange private viewings for individuals by appointment. Please contact Bernard on 01926 613503.

The Oral History Project

Our fourth oral history CD entitled "Accidents and Disasters" is nearing completion. We have interviews so far with Rowan Parker, Tony Fell, Sally Drakeford and Robert Cardall, covering memories of various exciting events. These include traffic accidents, severe weather of various kinds, floods, electrical failure and animal escapes. The disc should be available for sale by the summer.

We have also acquired two interesting recordings to add to the Cardall Collection. The first one, kindly donated by Barrie Hayles, is of Ruth Bates, who taught in Southam for many years. She was a teacher at Southam Boys School and later became Deputy Head of Southam Middle School.

We are also grateful to Geoff Warren who has donated a fascinating copy of a recording he made of the late Jim Fitchett, relating tales of his school days early in the 20th Century. Transcriptions of these recordings are available. Ron Fell and Harry Askew have both given us

interviews which will be included in later Cardall Collection Oral History CDs.

If anyone has any memories of Southam Zoo that they would be willing to share, our Oral History project leader, Helen Morris would be very interested to hear from you: please telephone Helen on 01926 812830. As well as recording your stories of old Southam, Helen is always on the lookout for more helpers with this fascinating project.

Copies of our oral history CDs are available from Helen at £3 each. So far we have sold 93 CDs: the money raised going to boost our funds and support the work of the Friends.

Joining the Friends and Making Donations

If you would like to support the work of the Friends, new membership applications and donations are always welcome.

Membership is open to anyone with an interest in preserving Southam's Cardall Collection. Annual subscriptions are renewable on 1st October each year and membership entitles you to attend and vote at general meetings. If you wish, you can also become actively involved in many ways. Annual membership currently costs £15 per person (£5 for the over 70s), or £20 for a couple.

For a membership application form, or to find out more please contact the following:

Chairman: Bernard Cadogan (Tel: 01926 613503)
Treasurer: Jenny Frith (Tel: 01926 814643)
Secretary: Pam McConnell by email to:
cardallcollection@hotmail.co.uk

For automated payments, our Bank Details are:

Bank: HSBC
Account Name: Friends of the Cardall Collection
Account No: 31436848
Sort code: 40 42 15

Please include your full name as the reference.

If you send us a cheque, we need to issue you with a receipt, so you MUST enclose a stamped addressed envelope please!

You can read and download back issues of our Newsletters on www.communityarchives.org.uk search for Cardall and scroll down to the foot of our page. You can also find us on www.southamnews.org

FoCC "What's On" in 2011

Event	Date(s)	How you can join in
Open House Wednesdays Afternoons at the OLE 2pm to 4pm	Wednesday 4 th May Wednesday 1 st June Wednesday 6 th July Wednesday 3 rd August & Wednesday 7 th Sept	Drop in and visit us at the Old Labour Exchange, Warwick Road. No need to book. Members can also volunteer to be on hand to help greet visitors
Southam Carnival. Theme: "Kings and Queens" FoCC Stall in the Recreation Ground with activity and display	Monday 30 th May	Help with Carnival preparations and/or man our stall on the day. Visit our stall and take part in the activity or buy a CD! Contact Barbara on 01926 612402
Schools Workshops at Southam Fire Station	Monday 4 th to Friday 8 th July	Help prepare materials / displays; help to set up and assist with the workshops at the Fire Station. Contact Barbara on 01926 612402
Southam Fire Station Open Day	Saturday 9 th July	Visit us at the Fire Station and take part in the activities
Southam Open Gardens: Old Labour Exchange open for visitors	Sunday 17 th July	Help to 'man' the OLE and show visitors around. Contact Bernard on 01926 613503
John Turner Festival of Arts and Crafts at Southam College	Early November	Take part in preparations and/or help to 'man' our stall at the festival for an hour or so on the day. Contact Barbara 01926 612402.
"Walk and Talk". Sight seeing tour of old Southam followed by a talk, tea and chat at the Old Labour Exchange	On request for groups of up to 12 people. (Fee £5 per person.)	Spread the word to any groups you are involved with who might be interested in learning more about the history of Southam and the Cardall Collection. Contact Bernard on 01926 613503 or Linda on 01926 814214.
Illustrated Talks. Daytime or evening presentations about Southam's Cardall Collection	On request for local groups and organisations. (Fee to be agreed.)	

There are also ongoing projects you might like to help with:

Project	Details	Contact
Digitising the Alan Griffin Photographic Collection	You will need some basic computer skills to scan and store digital images from negatives and record the details to the database.	Pam :01926 814923 Or Bernard 01926 613503
Oral History Project	Speaking to older members of the community about their knowledge and experiences of living and working in Southam. Recording and editing interviews, transcribing them, and producing CDs of the recordings	Helen: 01926 812830
Documentation Project (second phase)	Working through the boxes of artefacts and papers, checking our records are accurate and detailed enough. Updating records with new information Photographing the artefacts	Jenny: 01926 814643 or Bernard on 01926 613503
Publicity / Finding a suitable Permanent Home	Contacts or ideas you may have for promoting the Cardall Collection and for finding it a suitable long term home.	Bernard: 01926 613503 or speak to any member of the Committee