

# The Friends of the Cardall Collection

# NEWSLETTER

## No 10: Spring 2012



### Chairman's Update

The Winter months were just as busy as any other period in the Collection's existence, and the areas of activity were diverse and very positive in terms of the Collection's development.

One of the best parts of being Chairman is hosting visits to our HQ and it was a great pleasure to welcome Town Mayor Cllr Mike Gaffney (MBE, TD) and Mrs Gaffney to the Old Labour Exchange in November.



This was the third year in a row that Southam's Mayor has visited the Collection. Our visitors spent quite some time looking round the items on display and discussing aspects of Southam's history with the Chairman and Rowan Parker (himself a former Mayor). In early May we will be hosting a visit from several Town Councillors and their partners – helping to spread the word about the importance of the Cardall Collection and the potential benefits of preserving it for the Town.

Significant progress has been made with cataloguing the Collection and we now have nearly 4,000 items documented. This is well in excess of the 2,500 originally estimated by the Museum Consultants employed by Warwickshire County Council. The reason for the large increase is because many additional items were discovered and donated after Mrs Cardall's death and also we have decided to index individually all the items contained in folders. By doing this, we will be much more able to respond to requests for specific information.

We have also digitised over 2,000 negatives from the Alan Griffin photographic archive and have an

electronic index of the photos. Furthermore we are now well into the project to digitise and index 800 glass negative plates found stored away in the bottom of a cupboard. These are proving a bit of a challenge to index - all we have is the negative and no information, so some detective work is required!

There has been a big increase in the number of different activities we are involved in. These include talks to various local groups, Walk and Talk events, displays/exhibitions, visits, an artist in residence programme, more Oral History recordings, schools workshops, and involvement with Southam First activities to name but a few. A big thank you is due to our hard-working volunteers who keep this activity going forward.

We have also had contact from people as far away as Australia, the US and Canada, and phone calls and emails from various parts of the UK. One such call from the London area related to the 'mystery object' featured in an earlier Newsletter, and the caller provided us with a lot of additional information about some local connections.

A major issue in the past few months has been the continuing search for a permanent home. The recent sad passing of Mrs Sheila Mills (joint landlord of our HQ) has reinforced the urgency of finding an affordable permanent home for the Collection within Southam.

The key requirements are permanent working space and storage. Both are essential if the Collection is to be used to benefit the Town. The Committee has been heavily engaged in discussions with Orbit and our District Councillors about the allocation of Community space within the town centre redevelopment plans.

The recent survey sent by Stratford District Council to every household in Southam contained a question about what people would like to see the new Community space used for. The results of the survey may have a huge impact on the future of the Collection. We do hope our supporters remembered to mention, in their survey responses, the pressing need for a home for Southam's unique heritage collection.

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*Southam's Cardall Collection comprises artefacts, documents, photographs and memorabilia associated with Southam and its surrounding villages. Started by the late Mr Jack Cardall, its custodian was Mrs Irene Cardall until her death in 2007. The County Museum Service inspectors agree that it is an important record of the life and times of our historic market town. The Collection urgently 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.*

## Oxford Street, Southam

We had a lovely surprise last year when two complete strangers beseeched us to get them involved in our work. Joan and Gary Hunt are from Ballarat in Victoria, Australia and had come to spend eighteen months living in Southam whilst Joan was taking a course sponsored by Oxford University. Joan, who had been very involved in heritage and local history back in Australia, was very keen to get stuck into our history while in Southam, and has done a fantastic amount of research into the history of Oxford Street, where she has been living. Her husband Gary also initiated and developed our project for scanning some 800 early 20<sup>th</sup> century glass negatives. Joan has left with us a very thick file containing her research material and will send us a copy of her completed research work when it is finished.

Joan and Gary have now returned to Australia, but just prior to their departure the Friends presented them with a small memento of their stay and expressed sincere gratitude for the very valuable support they have given us. Joan and Gary are shown below, at the presentation with Committee Member Helen Morris and Treasurer Jenny Frith.



## VAD Research

The University of Warwick is holding a local history Symposium in May and have invited participation by professional historians, local history groups and collections such as ours. Val and Ian Brodie and Jenny Frith will attend and are putting together a presentation around the unique collection of photographs and artefacts in the Collection from the Southam VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) hospital. Opened in 1917 at the height of WWI, the hospital was housed in The Grange (also known as The Springs). Some fifty local women of all ages and from all levels of society were recruited to serve.

We have made contact with several descendants of local VAD nurses, and a picture is emerging of the women and girls whose lives were touched by the need to care for the convalescing wounded

soldiers in pre-NHS England. Our presentation builds on the work of Alan Griffin and his book 'Lest We Forget', and we have received invaluable help from Warwick County Records Office and several individuals including Mary Williams, whose great aunt, Violet Chambers (pictured below) was a VAD.



We hope at some stage to give the wider public an opportunity to view the presentation. As the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of WWI approaches in 2014, it seems fitting that the contribution of the women, some as young as seventeen, should be remembered.

We shall begin that process by participating in the Symposium, sharing our work with an informed audience and learning skills from others in the wider world of local history.

## Oral History Update

Further progress has been made towards the release of a fifth CD of recordings which has the theme of "Business in Southam". Interviews have been recorded with Frances Whitehall and Doreen Berry about the Land Army and the agricultural work done in the 1940s. Ray Pullin has recorded his memory of Tommy White the stonemason and Edie Plummer has remembered details of a large number of shopkeepers in Southam. These will be added to the information already recorded about Southam Zoo and the Cement Works.

Further interviews are planned, and if anyone would like to contribute their memories, please contact Helen Morris on 01926 812830.

Work is also being done on up-grading the recordings for use in a Southam heritage trail. It is intended that some of our oral history recordings be made available through a website

using 'smart' phones which read QR (quick read) codes. This project is being carried out in partnership with Southam First's Community & Culture group.

## Artist in Residence

Ryan Hughes, our resident artist, has planned a window display at our headquarters which will be in place in June. It will use QR codes which will provide maps for visitors to locate buildings in Southam connected with his three chosen personalities from our history - namely, Henry Lilley Smith, Mother Clare Fey and St Wulfstan.

Ryan has been working with the Collection to research the history of these important local people. He has produced a publicity leaflet, which he will distribute, along with an animation, to his contacts around the county including local artists, businesses and publications.

We look forward with excitement to the interactive body of work that he will produce later in the year, which will reveal his own special take on a combination of these three personalities and their histories.

## 1974 Southam High School: The year at Gaydon Air Base

Were you at Southam College (formerly Southam High School) in 1973/4? That was a momentous year in the school's history. The school building had been found to contain dangerous high alumina cement within its construction and needed extensive repairs. So it was decided to move the whole school operation to the disused Air Base at Gaydon whilst the work was carried out. (We have a photo of schoolchildren at Gaydon in the Cardall Collection.)

At that time, Mrs Alma Brunt was secretary to the new Headmaster, the late Mr Jim Skinner, and she has happy memories of the school's year at Gaydon. If you were involved either as a student, teacher or school employee and would like to contribute to an article about Southam College's year at Gaydon, please get in touch. Email [cardallcollection@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:cardallcollection@hotmail.co.uk) or telephone Pam on 01926 814923 or Alma on 01926 812930.

## Southam on TV

You may remember from our Spring 2011 Newsletter that we have been helping the "Restoration Homes" BBC TV programme team to research the history of No 1 Abbey Lane. Committee Members are now waiting with bated

breath to see if the Collection will feature in the programme or end up on the cutting room floor.

The film crew spent an hour filming at the Old Labour Exchange last year and it will be very interesting to see what the programme makers found out during the restoration of the property. The final filming session has yet to take place but we are told the planned transmission date for the episode featuring Southam is scheduled for June this year. So keep a look-out for the programme.



Filming in Warwick Road, outside the Old Labour Exchange. No 1 Abbey Road can be seen at the back, on the right.

## Young Cake Bakers raise cash for the Collection

Committee members Barbara and Rowan have been helping some of the younger children in Southam Primary School with their project about Southam's tradesmen.

Old photographs and handling-objects from the Collection were used by the classes and then they quizzed Rowan about the shops that used to be in the town.

To say thank you to Southam's Cardall Collection the children staged a school cake sale and raised £60.00 as a very welcome contribution to our funds.

This photograph shows two very enthusiastic cake-eaters!



## Winkless Family Research

Since last autumn when Helen found an unusual and exciting letter in the Collection and decided to find out where it came from, she has been following a trail of leads and contacts around Napton, Southam and even America.

The letter was written by Thomas Winkless in 1848 but there are no notes with it to explain its origin. If anyone has any information about the Winkless family, Helen would be very grateful to add it to her growing collection of evidence. It is hoped to make this fascinating story public later this year.

## Facebook & Wikipedia

Our mentor, Glynis Powell of the Warwickshire Museum Service, regularly provides us with training opportunities, and is particularly keen to develop our IT and social media skills.

As a result of recent training, together with some trial and error use of Facebook, the Cardall Collection now has a much expanded internet presence. As well as finding us on [www.communityarchives.com](http://www.communityarchives.com) you can now read about us on Wikipedia and 'Like' us on Facebook.

We recognise the importance of keeping up to date with developments in social media, particularly for generating interest from the younger generation. So if you can help us develop our web presence, please get in touch.

## Cardall's Corner

Don't forget to check the Southam Advertiser magazine each month for our "Cardall's Corner" articles. We use these to generate interest and tell everyone more about some of the items in the Collection. Thanks again to the District Advertisers for very kindly allowing us to publish these articles each month without charge.

## Forthcoming Events

Help is always appreciated at public events. If you can spare some time, even just an hour or two please get in touch. Contact Jenny on 01926 814643 or Bernard on 01926 613503.

**Leamington Local History Fair Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May:** We will have a stall at this fair organised by the Leamington Local History Group and held at Dormer Conference Centre. As well as introducing the Cardall Collection to the people of Leamington, we hope to be in touch and share ideas with other Local History Groups.

### University Symposium 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> May

The Friends will be represented at a local history Symposium at Warwick University, (see article on VAD nurses above).

### Diamond Jubilee Event Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> June:

Following the successful 1950's Retro Revival Day last September, the Friends will have a pitch at Southam First's Diamond Jubilee Event from 12 noon to 5pm. We hope to publicise the Collection locally by giving out information leaflets as well as having some of the Collection on show. There will also be a chance to take part in a fun Royal Quiz with a chance to win a prize.

### Chedham's Yard Visit Tuesday August 14<sup>th</sup>:

We have organised a trip to this heritage project in Wellesbourne. There was a high level of interest in this trip, which is now fully subscribed. However, if there is sufficient demand, we may organise another visit later in the year. So if you are interested in being part of a group visit to Chedham's Yard, please get in touch.

**Members Social Evening and AGM:** This will again be held in September. Date and venue to be advised.

### Retro Revival Event Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> September:

This Southam First event was a great success last year, and we hope to repeat that success this year with a display, competition, and tombola.

**John Turner Festival:** We will again participate in this event at Southam College in early November.

**A Winter Talk:** We plan to organise an entertaining talk in Southam this Autumn by a 'celebrity' historian. Further details to follow.

**Displays at Galanos House:** We have been allocated some display space at Galanos House and are continuing our close liaison with the staff there to use the Collection to inspire reminiscence activities for the residents.

**Living History Event - Battle of Southam:** We are planning a major event in partnership with Southam First and the Sealed Knot for August 2013. The Battle of Southam took place between Roundheads and Cavaliers at the start of the English Civil War in August 1642. This event aims to attract visitors to the town and stimulate interest in Southam's place in history. If you have information to share relating to the Battle of Southam, please contact Pam on 01926 814923.

### Talks & Presentations

We already have bookings for talks at Rugby History Group, Marton Ladies Circle, Cubbington Ladies Circle, Galanos House and another talk at Wellesbourne. Enquiries about presentations to local groups, workshops and our popular Walk & Talk events are always welcome.

# Southam's Cardall Collection



## Information and Contacts

Are you interested in local history? Do you belong to a local community or business group that would be interested in hearing more about the Cardall Collection? Would you like to join the Friends and support their work? This is the information you need:

### General Information, Suggestions or Enquiries:

Please contact the Chairman, Bernard on 01926 613503 or email [cardallcollection@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:cardallcollection@hotmail.co.uk)

### "Walk and Talk" Events

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 tea and chat at the Old Labour Exchange. Complete session lasts about 2 hours. Fee: £5 per person includes refreshments.

Contact: Linda on 01926 814214 to find out more.

### Presentations and Talks for Local Groups

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. (A fee will be charged by agreement.)

### Exhibitions & Workshops:

Available for residential homes, schools and similar institutions, Reminiscence and/or educational sessions with displays and activities appropriate to the age group.

Please contact our Outreach Leader: Barbara on 01926 612402.

### Membership of the Friends and/or Donating:

If you would like to support our work please complete and return the form below, with your payment. This form can also be used to make a donation or renew your existing membership. (Membership is renewable on 1<sup>st</sup> October each year and lapses if you do not renew it by 31<sup>st</sup> December.)

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## Friends of the Cardall Collection

The Old Labour Exchange, 2/4 Warwick Road, Southam CV47 0HN

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL & DONATION FORM

Name: .....

Address: .....

Telephone: ..... Email: .....

*I would like to be a member of the Friends of the Cardall Collection and enclose herewith my membership subscription. (Current subs are: £15 for individuals, £20 for a couple, £5 for the over 70s)*

£

*I would like to donate the following amount to support the objectives of the Friends of the Cardall Collection.*

£

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Please return this form with your payment to the Treasurer: Jenny Frith, Beech-Hurst, Warwick Road, Southam CV47 0HN. Cheques payable to: The Friends of the Cardall Collection. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope for your receipt. Payments by internet banking to: HSBC Account Sort Code: 40 42 15 Account No: 31436848 Ref: (your name).

**Membership is renewable on 1<sup>st</sup> October each year. Many thanks for your support.**