

LAMORBEY & SIDCUP LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER NO.1 AUTUMN 1983

Welcome to the 1983/84 Society Year. I am sure you will enjoy the Autumn Programme as it is beginning this evening with a talk by our much loved "Elder Member" Pip Hayward. It was thought at one stage that due to a dog bite during the summer holidays that Mr. Hayward would still be hors de combat at the end of September and unable to honour us with his presence. However, due to a good constitution and great tenacity on his part, he has been able to resume most of his usual life.

The 1982/83 year ended on the 11th May with Mr. Hayward giving us a superb lecture on "Hops and Hop-Picking". It was most enjoyable especially as we in South East London or North West Kent (take your pick) have only to drive a few miles to see the hops growing. We were informed that Oast and House have the same meaning, so being most intelligent people we now refer to the Oasts of Kent. Jack Saunders gave Mr. Hayward a vote of thanks on behalf of the Society, which was most effective.

A few days following the last meeting our Annual Outing took place. Mrs. Nash, with her wonderful knack of organisation, arranged that we visited not one but three places of interest, namely Haxted Mill, Chiddingstone National Trust Village and Penshurst Place. Having visited the Mill and Village we were set down at Edenbridge and went our own ways to partake of picnics or pub lunches, gathering at the appointed time and place to reboard the coach - unfortunately the coach was not there! Our vehicle eventually arrived with a most apologetic driver who told us that although he was using a new coach the engine just would not start. All this was soon forgotten as we arrived at Penshurst and toured the home of the famous Sidney family. Mr. Frank Drake, who had been very ill, managed to come on the outing and I found his comments most interesting on the rooms, furniture etc. of this noble structure. However, to lesser things but nevertheless a great delight - tea-time. Mrs. Nash had arranged a room to ourselves and I must say that it was a very happy replete set of Society Members and friends that left the tea-room. It was also very pleasant having Ann Brunton's American friends with us. Miss Jean Lidstone and myself have just enjoyed a day in the same countryside. We had lunch at the Leicester Arms, Penshurst and then went north to Chiddingstone. We made a point of visiting the "Chiding Stone" and were amazed at its size and rather odd formation. One theory given is that prior to the church being built a preacher could use the stone as an open air pulpit. The object of the day was to return to the church to study the Hatchments at our leisure. The Verger, hearing us emblazon one such hatchment took down from the pillar the glass framed modern painting of all these hatchments. Many of you will remember this object from photographing or just viewing it as we went round the church on the outing. You can imagine our pleasure at this most unexpected gesture which enabled us to carry the picture into the churchyard for good photographic conditions.

Our Society outings seem to whet appetites for further exploration. Do you all find this so?

The 1984 Spring Outing is under discussion and a referendum on the venue will be held during the Autumn Term.

Alison Bottle, one of our youngest members, is now in Australia. We hear that she is having a lovely time and not sure at this point whether she will take up permanent residence.

At our last meeting I tentatively enquired whether anyone would walk the Borough with me during the summer holidays. To my amazement, at the end of the meeting at least six members said they were interested. Our first walk around Sidcup was probably the most successful from the point of view of members and friends participating - seventeen in all. Other Borough walks have been made round Crayford, Erith, Bexley and Footscray. It was an exciting moment when one of our number called for the Fire Brigade as we noticed that Owletts of Bexley was on fire. The last two walks were around Eltham, which Mr. John Kennett of the Eltham Society led. He very kindly gave of his time as I had written to him that Mr. Percival, Pam and myself (ex students of his class "Eltham Past & Present") thought it would be an excellent idea to have such a knowledgeable local resident with us. My thanks are due to everybody that took part, in particular Angela Everett, who planned the walks with me, her husband, Derek, who led several, Miss K. Roome, who took us round St. Mary's, Bexley and to two colleagues of mine from the Bexley Civic Society who commented on architecture as we progressed. If you feel that this type of walk is a good venture, perhaps one person or a group of people could start planning further itineraries. Perhaps you would let me have your thoughts on this. Many thanks.

Kent Archaeological Society. It is most gratifying to notice that at least four members of our Society are members in their own right of this august body, namely Misses Morris and F. Oxley and Messrs. Hayward and Drake. The yearly publication shows Lamorbey & Sidcup L.H.S. being granted membership in 1957. The book issued in 1983 has chapters on F. Murray - Rector of Chislehurst, Danson Park and Hall Place. Should any member wish to see this book please let me know.

Lamorbey & Sidcup - Then, Now & Tomorrow. As I have just reminded you, the Society has been in existence for many years. The attendance book quotes "Founded 1952", Archive work that was undertaken previously now seems lost to the Society and we have to recommence work on our area. Many of you, I know, already undertake serious research on Family History, Family Links with the City of London etc. Jean Lidstone has lent me a lovely scrap-book which is in front of me at the moment of writing and opened at a page showing a Kentish Times cutting of 1962 "Once Upon A Time Deer Roamed in Lamorbey Park." What an exciting line for us local history people and what prospect for historical exploration

Mrs. Nash has promised me a wealth of cuttings from the local paper and prior to my leaving the office I was copying for the Society every piece of local material I could find. For instance, if The Hollies is sold our area will be quite different. We need research on The Hollies, although it is well researched at Hall Place so a photographic last look would be in order. Halfway Street Infants School ought to be photographed. Sidcup High Street is changing continuously. The Shuttle and Wyncham Streams have been widened recently. My point is that "Today" so quickly becomes "Yesterday" and history. We need to gather the recollections of the older residents of the area before it is too late

Any ideas - any volunteers - come on, have a go.

Please think about it, so that in future we may say with confidence and pride, Lamorbey & Sidcup LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY.

Frances Oxley
Hon. Secretary