

Land Settlement Association

Bulletin No14
(November 2015)

Sidlesham Heritage Trail



Premiere of 'A Life from the Land'

100 people packed into Sidlesham church hall on 4th November to see our film which combines archive footage of the LSA with the memories of Helen & Don Baldwin, Freda Booth, Rita Cloud, Norman Dixon, John Graves, John Litter, Charlie Roe, Wil & Becky Wilson and Bert Young.

The ending of the film was greeted by spontaneous applause.

Exhibition at the Novium

The Novium Museum in Tower Street, Chichester, have an exhibition of the LSA Heritage Trail, including our film. Admission is free.

Sussex Life

The November edition of Sussex Life (page 27) contains an article about the Sidlesham LSA called 'North to South'.

Sidlesham School Admissions Register

Trawling the School Admissions Records at West Sussex Records Office we now have the names of 121 of the original ex-miners and shipbuilders who arrived between 1936 & 1938. 30 of them 'returned north'.

Through the Keyhole

The 'Stories' section of the website has details of all the LSA properties with the names of tenants and staff who lived in them. Many of the names have come from back copies of the weekly LSA Bulletins. A few properties have a full history, others have gaps.

Can you check your property and those of your neighbours and let me know if you can fill in any of the gaps or initials of the names. For example:

No 70:

- CA Holley (no arrival date) was here in January 1959 (LSA Bulletin 542) Joan Holley was Secretary of Fletchers Hut at that time. No departure date.
- AF Marsh (no arrival date) was a tenant here in August 1964 (LSA Bulletin 827) The family left in September 1969 (LSA Bulletin 1086)
- Roger King (no arrival date) was here in September 1965 (LSA Bulletin 1086) No departure date.
- The Boatman family (no arrival date) were tenants in August 1973 (LSA Bulletin 1292). No departure dates.

Who do you think you are

The 'People' section of the website lists the tenants and staff associated with the LSA in alphabetical order. The 'Stories' section brings the heritage trail to life by recounting the memories of tenants, staff or their relatives.

For example: No 61: Josh Aitchison

Joshua Aitchison (known as Josh) was my paternal grandfather. I remember visiting my Grandparents, in the late 1950s and 1960s in their house at No. 5 for Sunday lunch. (always a roast meal followed by an enormous rice pudding.)

Josh was born on 17th May 1887at Byker. He worked at Benton Old Pit as an apprentice joiner. By 1911 he was working for the Newcastle Tramway Co as a conductor based at Wallsend. Later he became a driver and family tradition has it that he met his future wife Kate Smiles when she was his clippie on the tram.

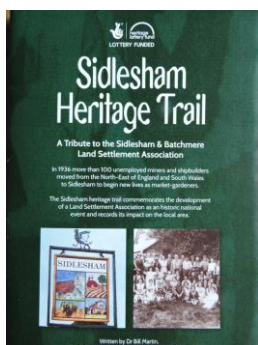
He served in the Grenadier Guards in the First World War. After the war he returned to the trams but lost his job in the depression of 1928. After 7 years unemployment he applied for the Land Settlement Scheme. After 3 months at Sidlesham the family moved south to join him. His eldest son Robert worked for Hill the builder erecting the greenhouses. (Robert died in 1943 as a member of the Dam Busters Squadron - there is a grave for him in Sidlesham Parish Churchyard and he is on the Village War Memorial.) My father John who had won a scholarship in Newcastle and it was transferred to Chichester High School for boys. At that time they lived at 61 Street End, they were still there when Robert died. Later they moved to No. 5.

Josh worked for the LSA until he retired in the early 1950's, one of his jobs was bringing a stationary steam engine to the greenhouses to sterilise the growing beds with steam. He died in October 1971 and is buried in the village churchyard.

Hope this helps, we're looking forward to seeing the exhibition at the Novium.

Jennie Aitchison, (Grand-daughter)

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Heritage Trail leaflet

Copies of the trail leaflets (£1.00 minimum donation) are available from the RSPB Visitor Centre, West Sussex Libraries, the Records Office and from (November) the Novium Museum.

Alternatively contact me direct and I can deliver (locally!)

What's happening next?

2016: Presentations to Birdham WI (February) West Sussex Archives Society (March), Friends of Chichester Cathedral (March) and Bognor History Society (April), and in July a 'DEFRA Away-Day' - a visit to Sidlesham by ex-employees of the Ministry of Agriculture!

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