

Land Settlement Association

Bulletin No 46

(July 2020)

Sidlesham Heritage Trail



News Update

I trust you are all keeping well and staying safe in these unprecedented times. The lockdown restrictions of the on-going pandemic have enabled me to progress our project and I have also used the time to add another LSA!

Recent contacts

In a previous Bulletin I explained that whilst researching the 1939 Census I had found the names of 10 'trainees' based at Batchmere Training Centre. Whilst some of these men became tenants at Sidlesham LSA, I assumed that others had 'returned north'. However, I have recently been contacted by the family of Joseph Allison.

Once the first cohort of tenants had been trained in 1936/37 their temporary accommodation (ie: Keynor hut) became a community hall. Future prospective tenants were then trained at national centres and allocated to LSA across the country. (Thanks to Peter Clarke for this information). Joseph Allison may have become a tenant at Potten or Chawston LSA as the family have records of Joseph living in Bedfordshire in the 1940s.

Stefan Barkoviak (No 126) contacted me as a new neighbour had moved into No 103 and discovered a former LSA trailer hidden in the brambles!

"They were towed by the Massey Ferguson 135's or the larger 185's and were always in evidence in the area. In fact they made up the majority of the local traffic for most of the LSA era. They were used not only for collecting produce at the tenants' gates but also deliveries from the propagation department and the stores. I did a stint on them as tractor driver's mate over the summer holidays with either Bill 'Bowser' Bull or Ken Wood. "Bowser" because of his love of Callard and Bowser's sweets. Nobody could understand a word he said because of his thick Sussex accent, but having worked alongside him, I got to understand what he was saying and he was always cracking jokes."

I can only say that anyone who had lived in the LSA era would recognise one of these immediately. It would be no exaggeration to say that they were part of the LSA signature. (Stefan Bartkowiak No 104)



The photos show LSA trailers made from former army lorry axles by local blacksmith Fred Stacey. The hitch on the front was a simple loop that the hook on the back of the tractor picked up from a bar on the 3-point hitch.

No suspension. Front barrier with metal frame and wooden horizontal slats. Trailer bed also wooden boards.

Loading and stacking was by hand, individual lettuce or celery boxes or tomato chips. No pallets.

They were also used for delivery runs from the stores with hardware, fertiliser, glass, timber, etc

Another wartime story

This Nissen hut was on our holding (No 104) when we arrived in 1962. I remember distinctly, one of the 'old boys' at the time remarking that it housed a Canadian ant-aircraft gun crew. The gun itself was located in the southern end of our back field. This was presumably to defend the thousands of Canadians mustering in the area for D-Day, mainly off the Redlands Lane area (in Birdham). (Stefan Bartkowiak)
Several similar Nissen huts can still be seen on other smallholdings.



An LSA House is being built

No, not the one in storage at the Weald and Downland. I have sent Norman Slaymaker, now living in Wisconsin, USA, the dimensions and photographs of the house where he grew up as a child (No 52) as he wants to make a model of it. Here's one he made earlier of the South Downs Bus Depot. watch this space!



Weald and Downland Living Museum

The Weald and Downland Museum is now re-open to visitors. The Repair Shop, filmed at the museum, originally a half-hour programme on BBC 2 is now an hour long on BBC1, prime time. Unfortunately I didn't get replies to my suggestions that they might have a go at restoring the harmonium from Batchmere hut or the rocking horse made by Charlie Roe!

Crofton LSA

Following an enquiry from the BBC I have been researching Crofton LSA in Cumbria. So far we have the names of 150+ former tenants and 20 stories. Unlike other LSAs most of the first tenants were local – former miners and steelworkers from Barrow, Whitehaven and Workington. The LSA with 70 smallholdings was based on the former Croton Hall Estate, the home of the Briscoe family for 500 years. The hall itself housed the first tenants as well as the school. Later it accommodated Land Girls and Prisoners of War worked on the smallholdings.. The walled garden of the estate became the propagation unit.

Crofton LSA closed in 1974, tenants could buy their houses, but the smallholdings were transferred to Cumbria County Council to be used as 'starter farms' for young farmers.

KEEP WELL STAY SAFE KEEP IN TOUCH

Thank you for all your continued support and assistance with this project.

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