Southgate District Civic Voice

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Newsletter No.256 April 2021



COMING EVENTS

OPEN MEETING & 2021 AGM

Saturday 8th May 2021 at 2.30pm



At the History Group Meeting Dr Helen Fry will talk about MI9 -The Secret Service for Escape and Evasion in WWII. (See page 12 for a brief outline of what the talk will be about).

This meeting will be followed by the **AGM**. Please be sure to stay on for the AGM, as it is your opportunity to influence how your society is run over the next year.

As this meeting will be by zoom, you will need to register via https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sdcv-talk-agmmi9-the-secret-service-for-escape-evasion-in-wwii-tickets-140308349049?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch

Please note the talk & AGM are free to members, but the talk will be £5 to non-members, who can receive a refund if they join SDCV! All are welcome, so please pass this on to anyone who may be interested.

See inside for: Agenda for the AGM (page 3)

Jane Maggs - A Woman of Influence (page 5) Beaver Hall - What's in a Name? (page 6) Report of our Spring Open Meeting (page 7)

The Coming of the Railway: Remembered by Henrietta Cresswell (page 8)

Obituary for Peter Brown (page 11) Our Online Shop is now Open! (page 13)

Contributions to the January newsletter should be sent by Friday 18th June 2021 to the Editor: Colin Barratt, 48 Maplin Close, Winchmore Hill, London, N21 1NB Tel: 0208 360 3979. e-mail: newsletter@southgatedistrictcivicvoice.org

Note:- Copies will be emailed, hand delivered or posted during week commencing 5th July 2021

Southgate District Civic Voice ~ Established to conserve and enhance the environment in Southgate, New Southgate, Cockfosters, Palmers Green, Winchmore Hill and Hadley Wood. (Registered as an amenity society with Civic Voice).

SOUTHGATE DISTRICT CIVIC VOICE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The following positions are elected at the AGM: President Vice-Presidents Chair Secretary Membership Secretary Treasurer Newsletter Editor Publicity Officer Committee Members (6 in total) The role of Vice Chair is elected by the committee. Executive Committee (EC) meetings are held approx. every two months, with e-mail discussion amongst members in between. NB. You will need a valid e-mail address to be a member of the EC. **NOMINATION FORM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 8th May 2021** To: From: (Your name & address) Secretary Southgate District Civic Voice Harwood, The Vale, Southgate, London, N14 6HN Or return to info@southgatedistrictcivicvoice.org I wish to nominate _____ for election as: • An officer of Southgate District Civic Trust, in the post of • A Member of the Executive Committee (Delete as appropriate) Signed: Date: I agree to be nominated for the above position. Signed: Date

E-mail:

Southgate District Civic Voice Open Meeting & Annual General Meeting

Saturday 8th May 2021 2.30pm Virtual meeting via Zoom

NOTE: Reports from the Executive Committee will be sent out to members a week before the AGM.

Agenda

Local History Open Meeting

Talk by Dr Helen Fry: "MI9 - The Secret Service for Escape and Evasion in WWII"

Brief break.

Southgate District Civic Voice Annual General Meeting

Apologies for absence

Minutes of AGM 12th September 2020

Matters arising

Reports of the Executive Committee

Chair - Graham Davis

Secretary - Preenal Gondhea

Treasurer - presentation of accounts - Elaine Tyler

Membership Secretary – Joe Studman Newsletter Editor – Colin Barratt

Reports of Groups & Representatives on Outside Bodies

Update on Projects and Actions

Elections for Year 2021/2022

President

Vice-Presidents

Chairman, Executive Committee

Secretary

Treasurer

Membership Secretary

Newsletter Editor

Publicity Officer

Members of Executive Committee (up to 6 members)

Graham Beech Memorial Award

Any other business

CIVIC VOICE UPDATE



Civic Voice held their long delayed AGM on 17th March via Zoom. Of course much of the meeting was taken up with the formal necessities, however one agenda item had a personal interest, as I was elected to the *Civic Voice Board* as a *Trustee*.

I am delighted to join the board of an organisation that has done so much to further the needs of communities and particularly at a time when our planning system is under such scrutiny with the proposed reforms. There will certainly be a few challenges ahead!

At the AGM, Ian Harvey the Executive Director set out Civic Voice's thoughts on the Government's various consultations. Ian said: "We support the greater focus on delivering high quality design in the planning system through design guides and codes, but design and community engagement needs to be considered in the context of the wider reforms to the planning system".

Civic Voice has been consulting widely with member organisations, through a variety of online surveys, regional member briefings and round-table discussions, webinars, newsletters, and blogs to gain views on the proposals from across the civic movement. You can see the Civic Voice responses to the various consultations on the NEWS page of the Civic Voice website (www.civicvoice.org.uk/news). Given the number of consultations around planning policy recently, there is not space to include the full detail here, so please read more on the Civic Voice website, with explanations on the implications to our community. In addition you can view the SDCV responses on our website.

One of the key messages from the Civic Voice AGM was that there are legislation changes planned that will seriously impact our ability as a community to influence any developments in our town centres, high streets and neighbourhoods. Therefore it is important that groups like ours remain aware and active in responding in order to ensure our voice is heard.

Final news from Civic Voice is that they are intending to hold a Convention this year. It will be in Coventry on 15th October. Planning is in progress and more news will be available in due course.

This is a concerning time for the civic movement with so many changes happening, planned or proposed. Perhaps, this is a good time to join the SDCV *Environment & Planning Group* to add your voice to that of other societies through our national body, Civic Voice.

Jane Maggs

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2021/22

By now you should have received a personalised renewal form in the post for you to complete and return using the s.a.e. enclosed with it.

If you did not receive yours please contact the Membership Secretary urgently.

THANK YOU

JANE MAGGS - A WOMAN OF INFLUENCE



Every year for International Women's Day, the industry journal *The Planner* publishes a list of planning's Women of Influence, as nominated by its readers and assessed by a panel of judges that includes distinguished planners from across the UK.

Crucially, the list is non-ranked and non-competitive – their aim is not to tell you who they think the 'best'

women in planning are; but to celebrate the impact of women on planning and planners. As such, some women are on the list because they've had a significant influence on national planning policy; others because they've inspired the planners who work with them.



There aren't a fixed number of women on the list and this year's features 59 women whose nominations they felt met the criteria they were looking for, and who illustrate the breadth and depth of women who are having an impact on planning and planners across sectors and disciplines.

We are delighted to report that our Vice Chair and former Secretary Jane Maggs was recognised this year in the section called "Third Sector", which includes charities, membership bodies, think tanks, advisory bodies and networking groups.

The citation for Jane in this list reads as follows:

"Jane gives back and really cares about communities having a voice in the planning system. Over the last 18 months, Jane was instrumental in organising a community planning weekend to encourage the wider community of Southgate to come together to discuss and respond to a particularly controversial large development proposal in Southgate town centre, called Southgate Office Village. Concerned that the planning application for a 17 storey tower was becoming increasingly contentious locally and political, Jane approached Civic Voice to see if we could help her to facilitate a series of workshops to reduce the temperature of the debate locally, explain what's actually being proposed and encourage the local community to 'have their say'.

"Civic Voice helped to facilitate the sessions, but Jane led the organisation, publicity and developed excellent working relationships with local councillors, MPs, local authority officers, businesses, and community groups to ensure a good attendance and discussion on the day and at the follow up feedback session. The sessions were held in June 2019 and had over 250 people participating. All organised in less than six weeks for approximately £300, with greater public participation than the developer's PR consultants had achieved. The weekend gave local residents, politicians and anyone interested time to understand, raise and discuss the implications of the planning application and consider alternative ideas.

"Since this, Jane has presented her work and an overview of the process the society undertook to other civic societies at various Civic Voice events over the last year. Her work on the Southgate Office Village inspired us at Civic Voice to see the potential of 'community panels' and a role for civic societies in encouraging the wider community to get involved and shape local development proposals. This has led to us successfully campaigning for community panels and civic societies now being named in National Planning Guidance."

Congratulations to Jane for receiving this well deserved recognition for her work.

BEAVER HALL: WHAT'S IN A NAME?



Beaver Hall was situated on the site of what is now 41-49 Chandos Avenue in Southgate and was demolished by John Walker of Arnos Grove in 1871 after he purchased it when enlarging his estate. It was lived in by three generations of the Schneider family, one of whom, Henry William Schneider (1817-87) is profiled by Alan Dumayne in *Southgate: A Glimpse into the Past* [1987].

Henry Schneider's grandfather John Henry Schneider (1742-1824) was the first member of the family to live at Beaver Hall and expanded and improved the property. He was a furrier based at Broad Street Buildings in the City, trading in animal skins from Russia. (One of the merchants who worked with John Schneider and Co was John Nowland Sandell who became guardian with

Richard Abbey of John Keats and his siblings.) There is a window with the coat of arms of the Worshipful Company of Skinners, to which he may have belonged, at the Guild Church of St Mary Aldermary in Watling Street and Skinners' Hall is nearby in Dowgate Hill.

I came across the tombstone for John Henry Schneider and his wife Anna Catherina (1741-98) which is laid flat across the path just outside the west door of St Mary Aldermary several years ago and the clue it seemed to give to the naming of the family's country residence stayed in my mind: the beavers in the coat of arms, one at the top and three smaller ones on the dexter side. When following this up recently with research at Enfield Local Studies, John Clark showed me proof positive of the connection with the eponymous rodent in the photo of a child sitting on a statue of a beaver in the grounds of the Hall.





The main staircase, windows, doors and fittings from Beaver Hall were used in the construction of the now-demolished Stone Hall in Winchmore Hill and Herbert Newby in "Old" Southgate [1949] notes that two small cannon from the Hall could be found in the forecourt of 'Oakbeams' at Southgate Green (where they remain to this day). I assume though the beaver is long gone unless it's found refuge on the banks of the nearby Pymmes Brook and is awaiting the reintroduction of its real-life counter-parts!

Images: coat of arms from the Schneider tomb, St Mary Aldermary (R.P.); beaver statue at Beaver Hall (Enfield Local Studies and Archive); Southgate District Civic Trust placemat with view of Beaver Hall by John Hassell, 1804 (one of nine produced in 2015 showing local historic buildings).

Richard Purver

SOUTHGATE DISTRICT CIVIC VOICE SPRING OPEN MEETING

Saturday 27th March 2021

One Hundred and Fifty Years of the Great Northern Railway's Enfield Branch, a talk by Dave Cockle

The continuing restrictions due to Covid meant the open meeting was again held via Zoom. However, that did not put off our audience with over 50 individual sign in's to the meeting.

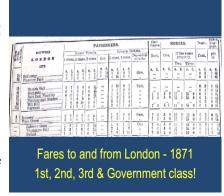
Dave started his talk by dedicating it to Peter Hodge, with whom he had regularly discussed matters concerning the railways.



The Great Northern Railway opened their *Wood Green - Enfield branch through Palmers Green and Winchmore Hill* on 1st April 1871, making this month the 150th anniversary of that event. Dave was able to take us through the implications of the development of the line and how it changed through time. He was also able to show how the line had brought changes to other stations in order to accommodate the new tracks, goods yards and signalling – in particular at Wood Green and Bowes Park.

He included many interesting details of how the new rail line impacted the area, particularly the land that was bought to accommodate the new lines and possible future expansions. Dave also gave more detail on those working on or using the stations, including the Station Master.

I was fascinated to hear that in addition to 1^{st} , 2^{nd} and 3^{rd} class seats there was also a Government class and the timetable even detailed the cost of taking a horse and cart on a train!



This talk gave a fascinating blend of train facts and social history of the railway. The changes to the line over that time remain visible, so next time I take the train, I will be looking at the buildings and track side with much more informed interest.

Jane Maggs

THE COMING OF THE RAILWAY

The Wood Green (now Alexandra Palace) to Enfield branch of the Great Northern Railway opened on 1 April 1871. Southgate District Civic Voice has joined with The Enfield Society and Great Northern in commemorating the 150th anniversary, including the placement of a plaque at Winchmore Hill Station (deferred from 1 April 2021 to the summer because of the pandemic lockdown), Enfield Society chair Dave Cockle's talk on the subject at our Zoom open meeting on 27 March and our reprinting of Peter Hodge's 1976 booklet about the first hundred years of the railway, The Hertford Loop. In this chapter from her book Winchmore Hill: Memories of a Lost Village (1912) Henrietta Cresswell describes the arrival of the railway in our area ('the Doctor' is her father, John Cresswell):



Winchmore Hill Station in 1871

For nearly a decade before its first sod was turned a railway through Winchmore Hill had been spoken of as a future contingency. "When the railway comes" and "If ever the railway comes" were phrases to be heard again and again. Various plans were discussed, but nothing came of them, and most people felt that they should not believe in it till they saw it.

The first Bill that was sent to Parliament proposed that the line should pass below the village much nearer to the Green Lanes than its present position, and there was from the beginning an idea of continuing the Great Northern Railway through Enfield to Hertford, and making the new route the main line for passenger traffic, as there would be fewer tunnels.

In the Summer of 1869, rather to the astonishment of the Village, there arrived a load of barrows, shovels, and tip trucks, and the Winchmore Hill section of the Enfield branch line was begun by the turning of sods in a large field in Vicarsmoor Lane, near the present Goods Station. In a few days rows of wooden huts arose, mushroom-like, and gangs of navvies were soon in full possession. The work was begun also at the Enfield and Wood Green ends. There were at that time no houses between Winchmore Hill and Wood Green, except the old cottages on or near the high road, Palmerston Villas, and a few gentlemen's houses in their own grounds, and no part of West Enfield was built with the exception of some large villas on the Ridge Way.



Navvies working at Vicars Moor Lane

The great business was the spanning of the deep valley between the village and the hills to the North. The summer was one of heat and drought, the stream was nearly dry, and the engineers took an entirely erroneous view of its capabilities: they did not realise the extent of the watershed from the hills on either side, and when the inhabitants described "lakes of flood water, and bridges washed away and piled one upon another" they were listened to in polite disbelief.

The soil was dug from a cutting in "Brett's Field" and tipped to form an embankment towards Fillcaps Farm, and soon quite an imposing appearance was made.

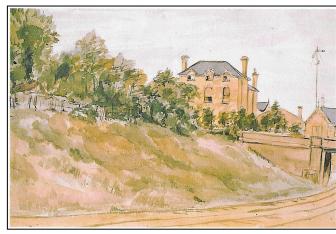
The pretty row of cottages where the Grandmother lived were pulled down, the great ash arbour ruthlessly destroyed, and the garden devastated: the holly hedge, dense as a wall, was grubbed up, scarcely anything remained but the tall yew and a golden-knob apple tree, which for years after blossomed and fruited, on the top of the cutting by Vicarsmoor Bridge. The lane was closed for traffic, and a notice board proclaimed, "This Road is stopped time the Bridge is being built."

After men and horses had laboured for some time a working engine was brought down called the "Fox."

The excavations were beautiful in colour, the London clay being a bright cobalt blue when first cut through, and changing with exposure to orange. There were strata of black and white flints and yellow gravel; the men's white slops and the red heaps of burnt ballast made vivid effects of light and shade and colour against the cloudless sky of that excessively hot summer. There were also dark wooden planks and shorings to add neutral tints, and when the engine came the glitter of brass and clouds of white steam were added to the landscape. On Sundays and holidays the men were, many of them, resplendent in scarlet or yellow or blue plush waistcoats and knee breeches.

It was not till the 1st of January, 1870, that the Doctor's house was given over to the invaders and he moved to Grove Lodge. It was then all deep snow, and the cutting was so close to the side of the house that the garden shrubs were constantly slipping over the edge and having to be brought back and replanted. A portion of the wall was built, but the frost got into the mortar and it fell almost immediately, so the garden became a thoroughfare for the navvies at their work.

There had been much fear in the village of annoyance from the horde of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire railway men brought into the



Grove Lodge

village by Fairbank, the contractor; but on the whole their conduct was very orderly, and they can hardly be sufficiently commended for their behaviour in and near Grove Lodge. A noticeable figure was "Dandy" Ganger, a big north countryman, decorated with many large mother-of-pearl buttons and a big silver watch chain. He instantly checked all bad language in the neighbourhood of the Doctor's garden. Many of the navvies brought their food or their tea cans to be heated on the great kitchen range, and never once made themselves objectionable.

It had been intended to complete the line in 1870; and that date may be seen on the girders of the bridge, beneath Winchmore Hill Station, but many difficulties were met with in the five miles of line; there was a culvert for the great stream in the valley, which looked as if it would carry anything possible, but when the water rose in the winter it sapped the foundations and the arch cracked badly; the treacherous clay, "blue slipper," sank lower and lower, till what had been meant for a level line became a steep gradient; long after the line was opened the "slip," as it was called, was so dangerous that every train slowed down to pass it, and many persons were afraid to travel by rail to Enfield. The hollow in the railway may easily be seen from Vicarsmoor Bridge or even the Station platform.

The working engines had each a voice of its own, so that it was easy to tell by ear which of them was passing with its load of trucks. "Fox" informed the world there was "such a hurry, such a hurry." Hunslet, a tank engine, that arrived much later on the scene, was particularly clear in her enunciation, informing all the world of her huffy temper, though I never heard she was ill to deal with as a worker —"I'm in a huff, I'm in a huff!" she puffed on her way along the line. "Progress," who laboured at the Wood Green end, proclaimed continually the name of the chief engineer — "Mr Claringbull, Mr Claringbull," she shouted with a strong accent on the last syllable. "Ferret" seldom left the Enfield portion of roadmaking, perhaps because everything was "such a heavy load, such a heavy load."

Besides the trouble caused by the wet clay in the valley, another delay was occasioned by the thoughtless action of a gentleman who moved the stumps in his kitchen garden, which marked the limit of the proposed railway, and by so doing caused the centre line, originally surveyed, to become incorrect. The secret was never divulged, but the mischief done was incalculable.



View from Palmers Green Station in 1885

The skew bridge under Hoppers Road was a big piece of building. It is where the Doctor's house and garden stood, and for one or two years after it was built the cutting each summer was a forest of rose and carnation poppies at least three feet high; they revelled in a new soil and made gigantic blossoms in every shade of crimson, scarlet, white, purple, and grey.

Five men were killed by accident in making the five miles of railway. A man who sleeps on a ballast heap on a cold night never wakes, the fumes are as poisonous as those of a charcoal brazier, and this fatality occurred more than once, besides other mischances.

All through 1870 the navvies worked; clay and gravel were excavated, and tip trucks filled the valley at Bowes and the much deeper one below the Enfield hills. A viaduct was built over Dog Kennel Lane, and the roadway itself raised 20 feet, the streams were imprisoned in culverts, bridge after bridge was built, either to carry rail over road or road over rail, the five-arch bridge at Warren House Lane being really picturesque till it became surrounded by houses. A huge sustaining wall supported the Grove Lodge garden. Station and platforms were built, sections joined, and the temporary metals became continuous for the whole length of the branch. A foretaste of the convenience of a railway was gained now and again by the wild delight of a rush home on "The Fox." Once a lurid night-ride from Palmer's Green seemed faster than the "Flying Dutchman" itself, as the little engine bucketed along over the roughly laid lines, with no weight of trucks behind to steady it.

More ballast was burned to lay the permanent way, and heavy rails and cast-iron chairs began to take their places. Another winter was passed, and it was said the railway would be opened early in the year; then a definite date was given, the first of April! But the villagers had waited so long, they only laughed at the day named.

"Oh! yes, the first of April! No doubt!" but when notices were published they had perforce to believe.

It was the night of the 31st of March, 1871, the permanent way was completed, the station was finished and smelt strongly of fresh paint, everything was ready. It was late in the evening, all was very quiet, the familiar sound of the working engine and attendant trucks attracted no attention, but suddenly the village was startled by a loud explosion, a perfect volley of explosions!

Many people ran down to the bridge expecting to find some unlooked-for accident had occurred. It was the navvies celebrating their departure with their last train of trucks by a fusilade of fog-signals under the bridge and railway station!



Winchmore Hill Station in 2021

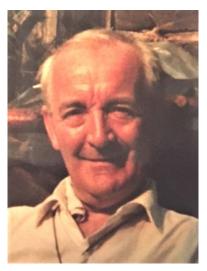
And on All-Fools' Day, 1871, the first passenger train came through Winchmore Hill, and the little village developed into a Suburb of London Town.

Images: Winchmore Hill Station circa 1871 by William Atwood (Museum of London); navvies constructing the line at Vicars Moor Lane (Enfield Local Studies and Archive); Grove Lodge in Middle Lane (now Station Road, with Winchmore Hill Station to right), from a painting by Henrietta Cresswell (Museum of Enfield); looking north from Palmers Green Station in 1885 (Dave Cockle Collection); Winchmore Hill Station in March 2021 (Richard Purver).

150th ANNIVERSARY OF THE HERTFOOD LOOP LINE

We were asked by Dave Cockle, chairman of The Enfield Society, to join with them and the present-day Great Northern company in commemorating the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Great Northern Railway branch line from Wood Green Station (now Alexandra Palace) to Enfield on 1 April 2021. As part of the celebration we ordered a plaque, which would be installed at Winchmore Hill Station. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions, this has been postponed until the summer, when we hope to be able to arrange a fitting celebration.

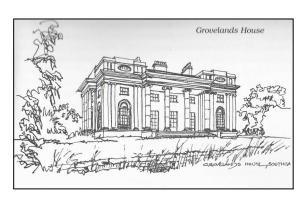
PETER BROWN



For those of you who hadn't heard, our long time member Peter Brown died in February at the age of 91. Peter had been a member since the earliest days of Southgate Civic Society. Our Membership Secretary, Joe Studman, recalls Peter's contributions to recording and improving our area:

"I first met Peter Brown about ten years ago at one of the early Broomfield Festivals. He was then in his mid eighties and was selling his wonderful hand drawn and hand written histories of various parts of Enfield, but

particularly Palmers Green and Southgate. I ordered several sets which he delivered by bicycle from his home in Belsize Avenue.



Examples of Peter's Drawings

Shortly after he gave a talk on the Overend, Gurney & Co banking collapse and wove it into the story of the Cedar tree in The Quaker burial ground in Winchmore Hill. He was a joy to listen to.

On his last renewal form for SDCV he scrawled 'too old' next to our appeal for volunteers. It was completely understandable. Peter had been a founding member of both Southgate Civic Trust and Broomfield House Trust and had been involved in the early efforts to restore Broomfield House after the two fires.



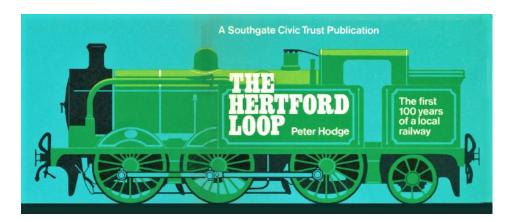
His daughter, Rachel, tells me he loved Broomfield Park and we hope to plant a tree there later in the year as a memorial to this great Southgate servant".

THE SECRET SERVICE FOR ESCAPE AND EVASION IN WW11

Talk by Dr Helen Fry at the AGM on 8th May 2021

When Allied fighters were trapped behind enemy lines during WWII, one branch of military intelligence helped them escape: it was called MI9. The organization set up clandestine escape routes that zig-zagged across Nazi-occupied Europe, enabling soldiers and airmen to make their way back to Britain. Secret agents and resistance fighters risked their lives and those of their families to hide the men. Central to MI9's success were figures such as Airey Neave – the first British prisoner to successfully escape from Colditz.

Helen's talk sheds light on escape and evasion with the previously untold stories behind the establishment of MI9 which was headquartered at Beaconsfield in Buckinghamshire. She reveals for the first time that not only did MI9 save thousands of Allied lives, it contributed to a massive intelligence gathering operation that impacted on the Allies' ability to turn the tide of the war.



We have reprinted this book, originally written by Peter Hodge in 1976 for the centenary of the Hertford Loop rail line.

This is to coincide with the 150th Anniversary of the opening of the first section of the Hertford Loop branch from Wood Green (Alexandra Palace) to Enfield on 1st April 1871.

The book is A5 format with 32 pages. £3.50 plus £1.00 postage

To order a copy email us on: sales@southgatedistrictcivicvoice.org

or ring 07826 868690

SOUTHGATE DISTRICT CIVIC VOICE ONLINE SHOP

We are pleased to announce that the SDCV Online Shop is now open for business.

To see all our products, go to the SHOP page of the website: www.southgatedistrictcivicvoice.org/Shop and follow the links at the bottom.



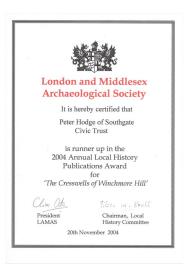
SHOP Southgate District Civic Voice has published a range of books and other material relating to the history and heritage of its local area. A full list of items for sale and online ordering can be found on our stall on GenFair - click here For details of other ways to order please contact sales@southgatedistrictcivicvoice.org

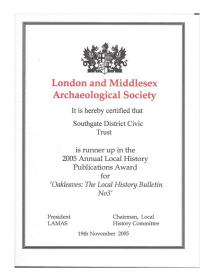
The shop uses the GenFair platform to host our products and collect payments. We are pleased to report that there have been some sales already and all is working to plan!

Take a look and you may spot something that isn't in your library – yet!

Finally, our thanks to Elaine Tyler whose hard work made this possible.

Jane Maggs







These LAMAS award-winning titles – Peter Hodge's excellent family biography, *The Cresswells of Winchmore Hill*, *Oakleaves 3* and *Oakleaves 5*, as well as the recently reprinted *Oakleaves 1* and 2 and Peter's *The Hertford Loop* – are among the publications available for purchase via the new Shop page on the SDCV website.