



TIMES PAST

The Newsletter of Kennington History Society

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THE HISTORY SOCIETY'S VISIT THIS YEAR TO THE HISTORIC CITY OF BRISTOL

As members may be aware the History Society has organised a coach trip to Bristol - a city steeped in history. The visit has been arranged for Thursday the 13th of September 2007 with members and their friends being picked up from the village bus stops starting at the Manor Grove at 9:30am, returning to Kennington at around 7:00pm in the evening. There are still seats available on the coach and if you would like to book one please contact the Chairman or the Treasurer, the cost is £8.00 for members and £10.00 for non-members. If you have already reserved your place please forward your payment to 163 Bagley Close or 9 Manor Grove.

BERTRAND AND ALYS RUSSELL IN BAGLEY WOOD

Most Kennington residents are aware that Bertrand Russell lived for a time in Bagley Wood Road. In fact he and his wife Alys had a house built there where they lived for seven years. Russell had many addresses in his lifetime and his stay in Bagley Wood was the longest, apart from his declining years spent in North Wales. Robert Sephton has written a booklet with the above title which gives a brief history of the house and the Russells' connections with Ottoline Morrell at Garsington and Alys's mother at Iffley. In the course of writing it the author came to realize that Alys deserves to be remembered more than just as Russell's first wife.

Copies can be obtained from Kennington Library and at meetings of the Society for £3.00.

QUOTATION Definitions of History

'The sum total of things that could have been avoided'

Konrad Adenauer

'An account, mostly false, of events, mostly unimportant, which were brought about by rulers, mostly knaves, and soldiers, mostly fools'

Ambrose Bierce

BLAST FROM THE PAST

It is late in the Autumn of 1629 and Oliver Smith and Henry Bosworth, two rich brewers of Oxford, have completed building the house in Kennington now known as The Manor House. It has been built for John, Oliver's son, who had married Elizabeth, Henry's daughter, in St Aldates Church in Oxford earlier that year.

John Smith was to become an Alderman of Oxford City being elected Mayor in 1639, and from 1640 to 1646 John was a member of the Long Parliament.

PROGRAMME

17th September 2007
Early Photography and the Local Historian
Dr John Wilson

15th October 2007
Bodging and Other Lost Crafts
Laureen Williamson

19th November 2007
My Life as a Journalist
John Chipperfield of the Oxford Mail

17th December 2007
The Bagley Wood District Nursing Association 1924-1948
Robert Sephton





WHAT WENT WRONG MR WILBERFORCE?

The 25th March this year saw the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade in the British Empire [not of slavery; that had to wait another 27th years]. Yet there are more slaves now – a hundred million or so it is estimated – than in 1834. How can that be when, in 1970, Oman was the last country in the world to make slavery illegal?

One reason is that there are far more people about, as the past two centuries witnessed the current population explosion. Another is that the definition of the condition has changed. In 1834 there was only one category recognised – chattel slavery, the outright ownership of another person; there are still some, perhaps a million, with a quarter of them in the Middle East and the Sahel region of northern Africa.

The United Nations recognised four other sorts of slavery – bonded labour, peonage [labour tied to the land], and the exploitation of women including servile marriage and children. The labour of millions is mortgaged in bonded labour or peonage, even though they are nominally free in their persons. The rites of passage – birth, marriage, death and so on – have such prominence in some cultures that going into debt may be the only way of financing commitments essential to a family's well-being. Usurious rates of interest and relatively short working lives for labouring in lieu of repayment can make both debit and labour inheritable.

Those sorts of servitude, distasteful though they are, can clearly be seen to have roots in economic factors. To a great extent so has the exploitation of women and children. Forms of servile marriage still exist, but it is in the prostitution industry that some of the worst exploitation occurs. A significant factor in that market in the third world is Western – including Japanese – demand. Thailand is one of a number of countries where prostitution is illegal, but the industry there is nevertheless highly organised and not at all concealed.

Children can be involved in slavery in two ways – as cheap labour and in sexual exploitation. Perhaps a few would condemn all employment of children provided it is not harmful to health, does not deny access to available education and gives enough time for rest and play. It can bestow benefit and may even be an economic necessity in peasant agriculture. It is in commercial farming [up to three months in the year in cotton picking for example] and manufacturing industry that grievous exploitation can and does occur, whether in the carpet weaving sheds of Morocco, brick making in India, shoe factories or dubious apprenticeships in bakeries in Southern Europe. The population explosion and the inevitable growth of cities well the number of street children who provide a vulnerable reservoir of cheap labour, recruits to apprenticeship in crime and victims and servants of the drug traffic and sexual exploitation, with boys as well as girls used as prostituted and as models in pornographic film-making.

William Wilberforce, MP for Yorkshire constituency for 28 years, led the abolitionist campaign in Parliament, employing the statistical and other evidence gathered by the Reverend Thomas Clarkson who rode horseback for many thousands of miles collecting data and setting up support groups all over Britain. Thus was generated the first non-violent mass movement, incidentally setting up the Anti-Slavery Society, the world's first human rights organisation. The Society is still active, exercising quiet diplomacy in the corridors of power in Whitehall and the United Nations, and, under its new title of Anti-Slavery International, encouraging the development of indigenous anti-slavery pressure groups in many countries.

Charles Swaisland

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Family Membership	£14.00	Single Members	£8.00
Student	£ 5.00	Distant Members	£3.00
Non member/Visitor £2.00			

Please make all cheques payable to: Kennington History Society

If you require any further information on the Society please contact:
The Chairman, George Ross on Ox 739208