



## ARCHIVE UPDATE No 55

### SOUTHWOLD

During a touring holiday in the 1920s Samuel South(2) 'discovered' Southwold, a resort on the Suffolk coast. It was the start of an association that was to last for the next 30 years. Annual holidays, with the younger South children, Jim, Ted and Joyce, were taken during the month of August. The family boarded at a house, and, providing the money for provisions and the like, they would be looked after by the landlady. Samuel would return home to deal with his business.



Ted and Joyce outside North Parade

At first they lodged at 'Little Winks', in North Parade, on the sea front but later stayed at a house in Stradbroke Road near the lighthouse. A beach hut would be hired and the days spent on the shore, walking to the harbour, taking the chain ferry to Walberswick for a penny, and returning across the common. An entertainment was to watch the guests at the Grand Hotel (long since demolished) promenading in evening dress before dinner.

In their later years Samuel and his wife would visit in the spring, summer and autumn for two or three weeks at a time as guests of the Crown Hotel in the High Street. Lasting friendships were made with local residents and on his death in 1956 a signal honour was paid when the flag was flown at half-mast on the Sailors' Reading Room, a local landmark.

In the family albums of the time there a number of local views of Southwold which, although randomly placed in the albums, are likely to have been taken on the same day and it is possible to trace the probable route of the photographer. Today little has changed.



Circa 1930 Grand Hotel (left) demolished



2008 Site of Grand Hotel



Circa 1930 North Parade (part)

2



2008 North Parade (part)



Circa 1930 Lighthouse

3



2008 Lighthouse



Circa 1930 Constitution Hill

4



2008 Constitution Hill



Circa 1930 Gun Hill

5



2008 Gun Hill



Circa 1930 Gun Hill



2008 Gun Hill

6

### ERNEST THOMPSON

After some 10 years of family research new discoveries continue to be made. Contact has recently been made with Jeff Thompson and his sister and Betty whose father, Ernest, was chauffeur to Samuel South(2) between circa 1923-1934. Ernest Thompson (1896-1989) started work as a van boy, and later driver, at Barratt's sweet factory in Wood Green. He volunteered as a driver in WW1 and continued in this employment on demobilisation before becoming the South chauffeur for some 10 years.



Ernest Thompson (2nd left); Maud South (2nd right)

Ernest drove Samuel all over the UK on business trips and the touring holidays that Samuel(2) enjoyed with his friends (see also Update No 8).



Ernest Thompson & Samuel (2)

In May 1927 a visit was made to Lands End.



Ernest Thompson & Samuel (2)

He was also responsible for taking the South family to Southwold and on occasion the Thompson family stayed at the resort. His daughter, Betty, has recalled:



Thompson family 1934  
foreground - Joyce South (left) & Betty Thompson  
Jeff Thompson (rear centre)

*'We went to Southwold at least four times over the years and Joyce always took me under her wing – I was 4 or 5 years the younger – when I was about eight years old (1931) Joyce found some small change on the cliff steps. She bought lemonade at Herrinton's kiosk and shared it with all of us. On our last visit (1934) she taught me how to search for amber along the beach'*

In addition to his chauffeur duties, Ernest taught Samuel(3) and Charles South to drive and also installed the bell system and indicator board at River House, presumably, during the building operations undertaken in 1927 (Update No 34). The system was re-installed in New River House in 1937. Operation of a bell would cause a 'star' to vibrate on the indicator board displaying its location.



Type of indicator board installed at River House

Ernest Thompson left the employ of Samuel(2) after a disagreement and later became a taxi driver. His position was taken by Charles Tompkins who remained in South employment until the closure of Samuel South & Sons in 1960.