

The Museum Collection

No.29

Souvenir of the Aldridge Orphanage



A pictorial souvenir of Aldridge Orphanage
R.A.O.B., G.L.E.
Druids Heath, Aldridge, Staffs.

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Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes, Grand Lodge of England

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INTRODUCTION

It is once more my privilege to usher into this world another book in the Museum Collection series.

This book in the series is a copy of the Aldridge Souvenir booklet loaned to me by a very good friend, in preparing this edition for publication I have tried to obtain the date of the first publication without success but it is thought to be in the late 1920's.

Before the end of the nineteenth century, work was in hand to raise funds for an orphanage. The driving force behind the scheme at this time was Brother L. I. Aulton, of whom it is recorded that he repeatedly gave notice of business at G.L. for his scheme to be discussed, but Grand Lodge did not seem to be interested. Undeterred by this lack of interest, he finally secured a hearing, and in January 1898, Grand Lodge gave its approval in outline, the vote being unanimous.

By November 3rd, 1900, negotiations for land on which to build had reached a most satisfactory stage, for it was reported that Brother E. R. Tongue Croxall, Lord of the Manor of Aldridge, had donated an area of land some three acres in extent, subject to certain restrictions which would operate in the event of the Orphanage being closed. The Directors accepted with thanks, and, this decision having been taken, the local Rector and ladies of the district took up the task of assisting the funds; every kind of local effort was put into the work, including a three days' Bazaar under the distinguished patronage of Lady Bateman and Scott and Lady Tenterden, who, says the book, "honoured the occasion with their presence".

On February 21st, 1903, the financial position had improved to the point where the statement of accounts showed an all in total subscribed over the five years of £1,204, and in spite of the plea of the timorous few who wanted another £1,000 subscribed before commencing

operations, a decision was made to commence building immediately.

Speed now became the second name of everyone connected with the project. Following the decision in February to proceed, plans were approved in April, tenders asked for and submitted by May, and the ceremony of cutting the first turf arranged for June, when Brother John Archdeacon officiated. The interesting and historic ceremony of laying the foundation stone followed four months later - October 3rd, 1903, and this operation, as was appropriate, was in the hands of the donor of the land - Brother E. R. T. Croxall.

Whilst the ceremony of cutting the first turf was accompanied by torrential rain, the laying of the foundation stone proved to be one of those days when it is easy for the most harassed citizen to believe the Lord is smiling on him. Brilliant sunshine, delegations of brethren from Lodges in most parts of Britain, representatives from many kindred societies, everyone in the full regalia of their organisations, assembled at the Aldridge Schools, and, headed by the Wigmore Schools Brass and Reed Band (which was composed of orphan boys from the Wigmore Schools), they paraded the streets to the ceremonial site.

The foundation stone was laid on October 3, 1903, and the building was opened on May 30th, 1904. In the course of the next 40 years or so, the whole orphanage question was a matter of bitter and political dispute, and the order finally got out of the orphanage business in 1945.

This is a pictorial view of a wonderful building which was designed to last for a very long time, at the end though the land and the buildings came under a lot of fire at Grand Lodge because of the indeterminate ownership of the assets.

Read and enjoy.

Mick Walker ROH

March 2011

SOUVENIR
OF THE
ALDRIDGE ORPHANAGE,

R.A.O.B., G.L.E.,
Druids Heath, ALDRIDGE, STAFFS.



FOUNDED - - - - - 1898

Souvenir

of the

Aldridge Orphanage,

RA.O.B., G.L.F.

Druids Heath, Aldridge, Staffs.

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For the Maintenance, Clothing and Education of Fatherless Children being Orphans of Members of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes under the Grand Lodge of England



Teach me to soothe the helpless orphan's grief,
With timely aid the widow's woes assuage;
To misery's moving cries to yield relief,
And be the sure source of drooping age.

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The Orphanage was founded in 1898.

It is situated at Druid's Heath, Aldridge, Staffordshire and commands a beautiful stretch of undulating country one side of which is capped by the historic Barr Beacon. It is 3½ miles from Walsall, 7 miles from Lichfield, 9 miles from Birmingham and 4 miles from Sutton Coldfield, which has a picturesque public park of 2,400 acres. The locality is considered very suitable for such an institution. The beauty of its surrounding scenery, its bracing air, and the dryness of its soil makes it an ideal place as a home for children. Here, "All is bright and beautiful."

The land upon which the building stands comprises three acres, the gift of Bro. Capt. E. R. T. Croxall, Lord of the Manor.

The first building was opened by the late Bro. The Rt. Hon. Lord Alverstone, Lord Chief Justice of England, on May 30th 1904.

A new wing was added in 1912, opened by the late Bro. Lord Alverstone on September 12th, 1912.

Further extensions were made in 1916, when the new Hospital Wards were opened by the late Bro. Dr. E. Williams Jones on 18th November, 1916.

In 1921 the new memorial wing and Recreation Hall was opened by the Grand Primo of England on the 16th May 1921.

Further extensions were made in 1922 to the girls' playroom, dormitories and staff quarters, also the Hospital Wards.

A new Laundry was also built (40 ft. by 20 ft.) fully equipped with up-to-date machinery, with room over for boys' Manual Training School.

1923 — Extensions to the North end of the building, Scullery and Larder enlarged. Workroom and Stores, with improved Bathroom and Staff quarters.

Grounds cultivated and laid out, and Tennis Courts formed.

The whole of the Orphanage grounds comprises 20 acres with farm buildings and cottages.

The first six children were admitted, Saturday 18th September, 1905. Since then 440 children have been maintained, educated, and well equipped with good moral training for the battle of life.

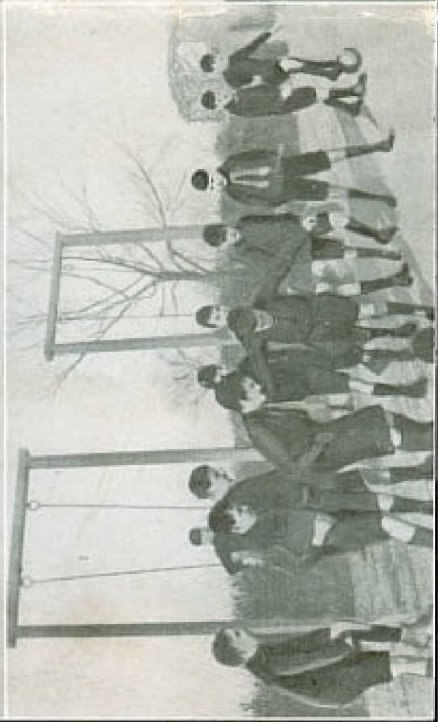
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"Not to make money, but to make men and women in the noblest purpose in life."

SNOWBALLING



ADMIRING THEIR GARDENS



GAME OF FOOTBALL



A BREEZY DAY

HAPPY DAYS :: :: ANNUAL SPORTS



TUG-OF-WAR CONTEST

No. 3 WARD, INFIRMARY



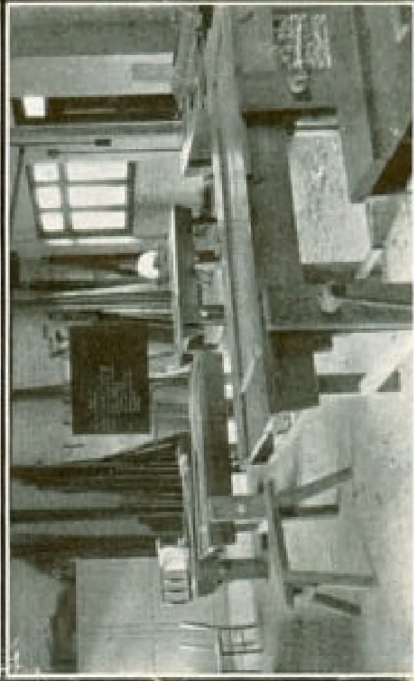
WORK ROOM



LAUNDRY



HANDICRAFT SCHOOL



DINING HALL



Boys' GYMNASIUM



6



CORNER OF BATHROOM, NO. 1 DORMITORY



LAUNDRY

PLAYGROUNDS & TENNIS FIELD



SECRETARY, MATRON, & STAFF



DINNER TIME

KITCHEN

VISITING DAY



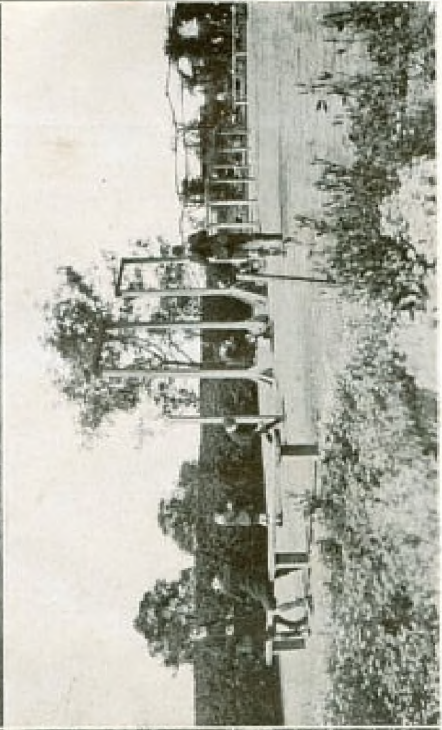
THE GIRLS' GARDENS



THE AMATEUR GARDENER



LEISURE HOUR



HERE "ALL IS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL."



OUR BOYS AND GIRLS, MATRON AND SECRETARY.

The Building is Heated by Hot Water and Lighted by Electricity.

SIDE VIEW OF ORPHANAGE

REAR VIEW WITH ROSE GARDEN.



GIRLS' PLAYING FIELD

VERANDAH TO INFIRMARY

The Sanitary Arrangements throughout are all that can be desired.

FRONT ENTRANCE

PLAYGROUNDS



BOYS IN RECREATION HALL

GIRLS' PLAYROOM

"It is for the protection, for the Education, for the care, for the maintenance of Little Children"
(THE LATE LORD ALVERSTONE)

DINING HALL

No. 1 DORMITORY



No. 5 DORMITORY

BOYS' READING ROOM

AN IDEAL HOME FOR CHILDREN.



FRONT VIEW OF ORPHANAGE.



THE FOUNDER AND THE MATRON.

ANNUAL SPORTS



PICK-A-BACK RACE

A CLOSE FINISH

"May every child that is educated here have not only a happy life, but be trained to meet with courage the battles that must come upon it in the course of its life."—(THE LATE LORD ALVERSTONE).

Regulations for Visiting the Orphanage.

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WEDNESDAYS—2.0 TILL 6.0 IN THE AFTERNOON.

SPECIAL DAYS FOR PARTIES.—Applications must be made to the Secretary, LEONARD I. AULTON, R.O.H., P.G.P.(Eng.), 95, Wednesbury Road, Walsall.

NO VISITING ALLOWED ON SUNDAYS.

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ORPHANS' FUTURE ADVANCEMENT FUND.

Established for the purpose of Apprenticing, purchasing tools, helping to obtain scholarships, or otherwise assisting children when they leave the Orphanage.

Donations in aid of the Fund will be gratefully received by the Secretary.

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All donors of £5 5s. 0d. TO BE LIFE SUBSCRIBERS. The Bronze L.S. Decoration is awarded to Life Subscribers only. Subscribers are kindly requested to give their full address in all cases.

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Nomination Forms for the admission of children can be obtained on application to the Secretary.

All communications and remittances to be sent to the Secretary, LEONARD I. AULTON, R.O.H., P.G.P.(Eng.), 95, Wednesbury Road, Walsall.

Also available in the Museum Collection series

- No.1 General Laws of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes.
- No.2 Minutes and Proceedings of the Finance Committee August 1895.
- No.3 Culshaws Story of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes.
- No.4 Claims and Fantasy Part One.
- No.5 Minutes of the first meeting of the Grand Primo Lodge of England.
- No.6 Changi Prisoner of War Lodge No.1.
- No.7 Abridged History of Grove House.
- No.8 Ceremony and Chorus.
- No.9 World War One Ambulances.
- No.10 The Nine Lectures.
- No.11 Dowlings Origin of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes.
- No.12 The Royal Lights.
- No.13 The Mystic Ring.
- No.14 The Old Ritual.
- No.15 League of Light.
- No.16 The York, Weston Super Mare.
- No.17 The Seminars.
- No.18 Benevolence.
- No.19 Peter the Hermit.
- No.20 Light.
- No.21 Gradus.
- No.22 Mystic Buffaloism.
- No.23 Symbology.
- No.24 The Airship R101.
- No.25 The Seal of the R.A.O.B. G.L.E.
- No.26 Ceremonies of the Knights of the Golden Horn.
- No.27 Changi & Unique Lodges.
- No.28 The Opening of Grove House Orphanage.

Copies of these and other publications by the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes Grand Lodge of England can be obtained from the Grand Secretary, Grove House, Skipton Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG1 4LA