

"Winefred". Paperback. Praxis Books 1994 £6.50
"Red Spider" Paperback. Praxis Books 1993 £5.00
"Mehalah" Paperback. Praxis Books 1998 £8.50
"Guavas the Tinner". Paperback. Praxis Books. 2000. £7.50
'Cheap Jack Zita" Paperback Praxis Books. 2001. £8.00
"Kitty Alone" Paperback. Praxis Books. 2001. £9.00
"The Broom Squire" Paperback. Blackdown Press. 1996. £9.99
"Margery of Quether and Other Weird Tales" Edited Richard Dalby. Illustrated. Sarob Press. 1999. Limited edition. £18 or \$32.
"Five Devon Seafarers". Taken from SBG's *Devonshire Characters*. Bossiney Books. 2000. £2.99

Biography:

"Now the Day is Over" by Harold Kirk-Smith. Richard Kay. 1997

Literary Criticism:

"The West Country as Literary Invention" Simon Trezise.

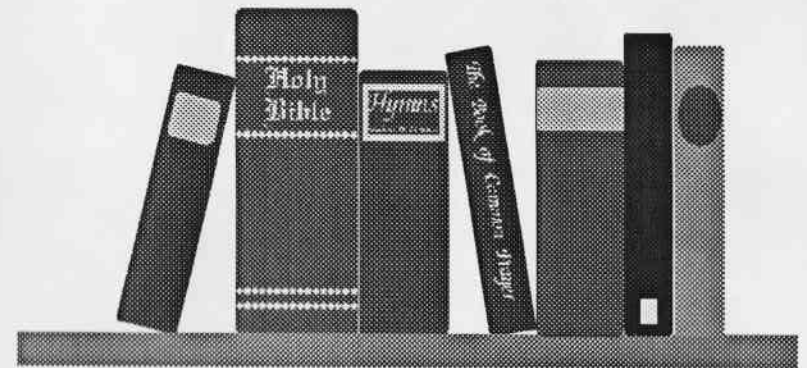
University of Exeter Press. £13.99

Family History, centred on Lew House:

"The Mana of Lew" by Cicely Briggs. Praxis Books. 1994. £5.00

Available from Sallie Briggs, Whispering Winds, Brentor, Tavistock, Devon. PL19 0LS

THE SABINE BARING-GOULD APPRECIATION SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER NUMBER 36

2001

AIMS OF THE SOCIETY

To enable those interested in the man and his work to share their enthusiasm and spread the interest among others. This is to be achieved by means of three Newsletters per annum (October, February and June), a membership list and an Annual Gathering at venues with some association with Sabine Baring-Gould.

A Bibliography is available from the Hon. Secretary.

The annual subscription is £6.00. Members joining during the year will receive back copies of the Newsletter for the current year, which is deemed to start with the October issue, when subscriptions are due.

THE COMMITTEE

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Hon. Secretary: *Dr Roger Bristow*. Davidsland, Brendon Hill, Copplestone, Devon. EX17 5NX. E-mail: rbristow@rbristow89.freemove.co.uk

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Newsletter Editor: *Becky Smith*, Crossways Cottage, Walterstone, Herefordshire. HR2 0DX. E-mail 100543.3270@compuserve.com

• Sabine Baring-Gould was born on 28th January 1834 in Exeter and died on 2nd January 1924 at Lewtrenchard

• He was a hugely influential collector of folksongs at a time when such songs were being rapidly forgotten.

• Folklorist. Magpie collector of anecdotes, practices, beliefs.

• Archaeologist. Pioneer of over 60 excavations on Dartmoor.

• Loved and respected pastor to a widespread Devonshire community

• Reconstructor of buildings - he made enormous changes to both house and church at Lewtrenchard

• As well as 'Onward Christian Soldiers' he wrote other perennial hymns - 'Now the Day is Over' and 'Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow' for example.

CONTENTS

Editorial	1
The Fenland	
Gathering 2001	2
Dartmoor	
Gathering 2002	3
New Publications	4
Things to Buy	5
The SBGAS	
Website	6
Mehalah on Stage	7
More About Mehalah	7
Snippets from	
Bill Oke	9
Deadline for Number	
37	10
Forthcoming Events	10
References in Print	10
The Hound of the	
Baskervilles	11
Adopt a Topic	11
Unpaid Sub-	
scriptions	12

Editorial

Well, we live in a time of crisis, it seems. A number of our members will have been directly or indirectly affected by the horrifying outbreak of foot and mouth disease, and will still be numb from the experience. My little smallholding has been on a D Notice since early April, and we're still not daring to feel that we're entirely safe. I have found myself wondering what SBG would make of it all. Having just produced *Kitty Alone*, it seems somehow to connect to the cavalier destruction of great swathes of oak forest in Devon. The common theme for me is humanity's ability to devastate, with little observable compunction!

But there have been some positive points: the best being the great outflowing of goodwill, and the value attached to social contact. This leads me to point out that SBGAS has no less than three gatherings in the pipeline, all of them new initiatives, and certain to be enjoyable, informative and strengthening of the whole Society. Contributions to this issue have been very varied and extremely welcome. A big thank you to everyone who has taken the trouble to write, and I hope I've done them all justice in these pages.

Another new initiative is the SBGAS website, which is now taking shape, and will give us an added dimension. Many thanks to Martin for taking it on.

Becky Smith

The Fenland Gathering October 2001

Ray Scott has compiled a spectacular programme for us, on the 13th and 14th October. Based on the settings and story of *Cheap Jack Zita*, we will enjoy an action-packed weekend, full of illumination, enjoyment and socialising. Almost all details have been worked out, and are as follows. This programme will be repeated in the next newsletter, but it is recommended that you keep this page safe, as there is a risk that the October issue will arrive only moments before the event.

FIRSTLY it is strongly recommended that participants book themselves into local B&Bs on the Friday night (12th), since the programme starts promptly at 10.00 on Saturday morning. Comprehensive leaflets listing 38 excellent establishments are available from Ray, or members of the Committee. Prices are mainly between £20 and £25 per person per night.

SATURDAY

10.00am Assemble at the Little Chef car park on the A10 Ely bypass, or be at the West Door of Ely Cathedral at 10.15, with car close by.

11.30am. Drive to Prickwillow, following the Cheap Jack's route in the story. Stop at a 'River Bank' on the way.

12.00, Prickwillow Village Hall. Coffee.

12.20pm. Prickwillow Church.

12.45pm Lunch at the Village Hall. Also the AGM.

2.00pm Book Sale

2.30pm The Vicarage.

3.00pm Prickwillow Drainage Museum, including the running of one of the pumps. Entrance fee payable.

4.30pm Tea provided by the Littleport Society. Tour of the town, scenes of the 1816 riots.

6.30pm. Back to Prickwillow. 'The Baring-Gould—Kingdon Influence on Prickwillow' A presentation by Chris Jakes, Senior Librarian of Local Studies at the Cambridgeshire Collection.

8.00pm Food.

SUNDAY

10.30am. A visit to Grovemere Shires, meeting the Great Horses of the Fens.

If time permits, a visit to the Lancaster Museum - a tribute to the airmen and aircraft who flew from this Fenland airbase during WW2.

12.45pm Lunch and depart.

The Dartmoor Gathering 2002

It is planned that the Annual Autumn Gathering for 2002 will take place over a weekend in early October, at Ashburton, on the edge of Dartmoor, with the usual accompanying afternoon talks, AGM and an optional group dinner. If there is sufficient interest there will be a full weekend of accompanying activities on the Moor, based primarily on a study of *Guavas the Tinner* (available from Praxis Books), with discussions of the text and historical background, and guided visits to locations mentioned in the story, as well as to other sites associated with SBG. There is also the possibility of an optional, inexpensive accommodation-and-meals package for the full weekend at the hotel, as well as participation on a non-residential basis. The availability of accommodation can be very limited in the Autumn on the Moor, so very early bookings will be necessary. At this stage we need merely to determine whether there is sufficient interest in the possibility of a full weekend event, and members are requested to contact the organisers for the proposed weekend, Jane and Philip Weller, and let them know which of the following options they wish to take, giving numbers interested:

a. AGM. b. Dinner. c. Full weekend with the accommodation package. d. Full weekend on a non-residential basis. Please send details by the end of July to: J & P Weller, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hampshire, PO14 3RU, England; or to p.weller@btinternet.com

It is appreciated that a firm commitment cannot be made without exact dates and costings, but we do need to obtain permission from the Dartmoor National Park Authority for large group activities on the Moor, in addition to making an early booking for the function room and accommodation, and so long-term arrangements and finalised programme will be determined by your responses to this provisional survey. Final details will be announced at the AGM 2001, with details and booking forms being sent out with the first Newsletter after that AGM.

See also Page 11.

New Publications

Looking Back on Horbury Christine Cudworth.

A well-illustrated history of Horbury, by a SBGAS member. Reference is made to SBG, and 130 photographs in colour and black and white mostly date back to the early 20th century. Available in paperback for £8.00, plus £2.00 for postage and packing, or hardback (limited numbers remaining) for £12.00 plus £2.00 postage and packing. Send orders to Christine Cudworth, 36 Beechwood Grove, Horbury, Wakefield, West Yorkshire. WF4 5JQ.

Baring-Gould and the Village Song-Men by Bob Mann. Published 2000. A single-section pamphlet, price £1.00. Available from the author/publisher. Boib Mann, The Flat, 56 Fore Street, Totnes, Devon. TQ9 5RU

The Introduction is Bob Mann's personal story of how the trio 'Baring-Gould and the Village Song Men' came into being.

(SBGAS members will remember Bob's talk at Killerton.) The trio comprises Bob who does the readings, and Les Noden and Mick Bramich who provide musical backing with vocals, concertina and guitar.

There follows a potted biography of SBG, under the headings 'The Parson' and 'The Song Collector', illustrated with many quotes from three of B-G's books.

Finally, a section called 'A Few of the Singers' presents anecdotes and quotes in dialect concerning seven of the singing-men. The original words of 'Strawberry Fair' and a section on Further Reading conclude this interesting and useful little book.

A Concert by this Trio was held at Tavistock Parish Church on March 17th 2001. Folk songs were sung alternately by Les Noden and Mick Bramich, interspersed with readings by Bob Mann. Wine and madeira cake were served in the interval. The concert was well attended, considering the weather and the foot and mouth trouble, and it was enjoyed by all, including three SBGAS members!

Sybil Tope

Things to Buy

☐ Tapes and CDs produced by the Wren Trust. The latest is *Dead Maid's Land*, a comprehensive and toe-tapping collection of folksongs, all from the Baring-Gould Collection. Tapes are £7.00 and CDs are £13. Available from The Wren Trust, 1 St James Street, Okehampton, Devon. EX20 1DW.

☐ Back copies of this newsletter. Singly or in sets. £1.50 each or £46 for the entire collection, from 1989. Apply to Sqn Ldr Philip Weller, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants PO14 3RU

☐ Books as listed inside the back cover.

☐ The 'Onward Christian Soldiers' tape as described in Newsletter number 35 A bargain at £5.00, post free. £1 of this will be donated to SBGAS funds. Please send your cheque to Keith Lister, 13 Grove Road, Horbury, Wakefield, West Yorkshire. WF4 6AG.

The Website

Having mostly got past a difficult period I have now got some distance with the SBGAS web-site - to prove it you can see a place-marker at www.sbgas.fsnet.co.uk ! I may, though, move it to a Hotmail account since there appear to be some good features in their web hosting that might be a benefit.

Why I am writing is to seek help and advice as I build the content of the site. Has anyone any ideas on presenting the benefits of membership more forcefully?

I would like to suggest that we have a page for advertising new and second-hand publications. As with the site I do for the Traditional Song Forum I would expect advertisers to provide copy and then ensure that they provide updated copy regularly enough to avoid embarrassment - would any of you want to do this?

I would like to include a forum of some kind where people could post queries and receive answers

I would suggest including a news page - again, the success of this depends on people sending me news or do we just have a digest of news from the last newsletter?

I will include links to relevant sites - my own, of course, as well as RSC and Wren Trust - what else might be included?

I would (modestly, I hope) suggest that it is not necessary to include material about SBG himself where that material is already included in the scope of my own site - this is about the Society itself (I will remove the page on my own site that has the society details and replace it with a link to the new site)

Apart from this stream of consciousness, what else do you suggest - anything could be possible!

Martin Graebe

Mehalah on stage

In November last, the Clacton Amateur Dramatic Society staged a production of 'Mehalah' for four evenings. The book was dramatised by Peter Horsler, who found the difficulties of selection and changes of location the chief challenges of the project. He used the book's own dialogue as far as possible, and hopes he retained the flavour of the original. He admits to making a substantial change to the ending, whereby Mehalah marries Rebow and becomes a devoted wife! Sacrilege!

Dr Alison Bush reviewed the production in 'Mistral' the magazine of the Mersea Island Society. She praises the set as 'splendid, as were the costumes, reminding us forcibly of the often grim atmosphere of the saltings, recalling our wild marshland...smuggling...poverty and rough lives of the fishermen, oystermen and local people.' The review concludes '*Mehalah* is a strange but well-researched novel by an interesting and scholarly churchman of the late nineteenth century, bringing to Mersea Island a sort of notoriety. Reminiscent of Thomas Hardy it is well worth a read if only to feel relief that our lives here are not so desperately depressing as all that!'

More about Mehalah

Member Gordon Horsey has sent the following:

In *Mrs Gatty and Mrs Ewing* a biographical work by Christabell Maxwell, published by Constable in 1949, I came across the following mention of *Mehalah*. The reference to 'Julie' is Juliana Horatia Ewing (1841-1885):

'Julie...began to study novels...recommended as noteworthy. Among those was the now well-known novel *Mehalah* by S. Baring-Gould... Mrs Ewing wrote the following comment. "It's *marvellous* what people will read and think *so* clever! A novel deeply recommended to me has made me aghast. I'm not very young, nor I think very priggish, but I do decline to look at life and

Snippets from Bill Oke

its complexities solely and entirely from a point of view that (bar christian names and surnames and the English language) would do equally well for a pig or a monkey...*Mehalah* is a well-written book with a delicious sense of local colour in nature....In not one other [apart from *Mehalah* herself, we assume - *Becky S*] character of the book is there an indication that life has an aim beyond the lusts of the flesh...the picture is as untrue as it is (to me) disgusting.”

She also wrote, “In *Mehalah* human beings are painted solely as animals.”

Gordon Horsey provides the following background.

Mrs Gatly (1809-1873) was one of the daughters of Dr Scott, who as Nelson’s chaplain, had taken part in the Battle of Trafalgar. The wife of a Yorkshire clergyman and a naturalist of repute, Mrs Gatly was the founder and editor of ‘Aunt Julie’s Magazine’ and the author (among other works) of five series of parables from nature, which achieved the immortality of inclusion in the World’s Classics. Her daughter, Mrs Ewing, became one of the best-loved Victorian writers of books for children. *The Brownies, Lob-lie-by-the-fire, Jackanapes, Jan of the Windmill, Daddy Darwin’s Dovecote* - these and half a dozen other stories were an inalienable part of the childhood memories of those born in the latter part of the 19th century.

Ecclesfield, Yorkshire, was the home of the Gatly family, including ten children, for many years. It bears comparison with Lewtrenchard Rectory. Mrs Gatly, like SBG, displayed the considerable energy of the Victorians: writer, editor, mother of a large family, involved in parish work as the vicar’s wife, and, oddly, an avid collector of seaweed, upon which she was an authority of repute.

Is it any wonder so many of us enjoy the company of these prolific energetic eccentric Victorians!? *Becky.*

Number One. A cutting from the *Holsworthy Post* dated 17th February 2001, found in the ‘Looking Back’ section.

‘120 years ago, Feb 19th 1881. The death of Rev Charles Baring-Gould, aged 73, Rector of Lewtrenchard, occurred on Saturday. He was ordained deacon in 1831, priest in 1832 and had held the living of Lewtrenchard since 1833.’

Number Two Bill says, ‘When I attended the Wednesday SBG Workshop at the Lewtrenchard Hotel (part of the Baring-Gould Festival last October) I had more than a first class day.

When queuing for coffee on arrival and talking to the man in front, he asked what I had said my connection with the family of SBG was. I replied that I had been taught History and Rural Science by Bickford Dickinson, later the Rev Bickford Dickinson who was curate to my own parish church at Holsworthy and later Rector of Lewtrenchard in the 1960s.

A tap on my shoulder, and the person behind me said “You must be an Old Shebbearian.” It was indeed my old school captain, the Rev Geoff Wrayford. We had not seen each other for some 40+ years! We had lunch together at Merrivale and were able to reminisce with great pleasure. What a small world!’

Number Three. Another mention in the *Holsworthy Post*’s ‘Looking Back’ column, on 14th April. ‘70 years ago. April 8th 1931. The Rector of Lifton (Rev G.F. Newman) was married on Wednesday at Lamerton to Miss G.E. Rowe, of Great Haye, Lamerton, ten robed clergy from local parishes taking part in the service. The bride is a descendant of Nicholas Rowe, a former Poet Laureate, and a grand-daughter of the late Rev Sabine Baring-Gould.’

Bill rightly adds, ‘It’s good to see SBG get mentions in the paper; keeps the whole thing in front of people and helps promote the Society.’

DEADLINE FOR NUMBER 37

Please let me have material for the next Newsletter by 15th September 2001 at the very latest. Earlier would be much appreciated. E-mailed text with attached illustrations sometimes works - but my computer is increasingly temperamental and I'm more than happy to have contributions in any form - handwritten included.

Becky Smith

Forthcoming Events

The regular Lewtrenchard Michaelmas Walk will be held as usual this year, on Saturday September 29th. For anyone who has not yet experienced this event, it comes highly recommended. A lot of work is put into it by members of the Wren Trust and others, who make it fun for all ages. Details of times and starting point should be available from the Wren Trust on 01837 53754.

The Baring-Gould Folk Festival and Study Break will take place this year from 22nd to 28th October. A leaflet is enclosed.

References in Print

Marsh Country Rambles. Herbert W. Tompkins. Chatto 1904. p. 20, re Devon and Essex Villages. Chap XIV (pp200-222). 'In the County of Mehalah'.

Secret Essex. Glyn Morgan. pub Ian Henry 1994. (original 1982) Paperback. p. 54 ref *Mehalah* under 'The Mersea Island Mound'.

Walks in East Anglia. II. Cambridgeshire and Essex. Egon 1979. Paperback. p.98. ref *Mehalah*.

English Parish Churches. Hutton. Thames and Hudson. The author notes *The Vicar of Morwenstow* as 'Hawker's novel'!!

Crossing's *Dartmoor Worker*. David and Charles 1966. p. 10. SBG signatory to W. Crossing testimonial. Opposite p. 112, photo from *The Antiquary* at Grimspound.

The Classic Fairy Tales. Iona and Peter Opie. OUP. 1975. p. 150. Picture from *A Book of Fairy Tales*.

The Hound of the Baskervilles Hunting the Dartmoor Legend

You will have found the leaflet promoting the above book by Philip Weller. One of our newer, and very energetic, members, Philip will be organising our 2002 Annual Gathering, as you will have noted on Page 5 of this Newsletter. Those of you at the 2000 Gathering will recall his very comprehensive slide show of Coombe-in-Teignhead, which features in *Kitty Alone*. The organisation of the Ashburton weekend has to be done unusually far in advance, for reasons that Philip has explained. Some behind-the-scenes discussion has revealed a probable small number of people wishing to avail themselves of the accommodation package - but we might well be proved wrong. It's a lovely venue, and would be a perfect place for an autumn break, particularly for those who live a long way from South Devon. Please give it your serious consideration, and let Philip know if you would like to stay one or two nights. We can say with near certainty that the dates will be the 5th/6th October. Needless to say, even if you prefer not to stay at the hotel, we are hoping to see a good attendance at the talks and excursions that the weekend will have on offer.

Adopt a Topic

After inheriting the grand title of Research Co-ordinator at the last AGM, I am now seeking your help to set up a register of areas of interest in SBG's work. Such information will enable members to know who is working in specific areas and should also open up channels of communication to assist with dispersal of information and perhaps the answering of queries.

To those already researching aspects of SBG's life, please

keep up the good work and we look forward to reading your findings either in your own publication or in the Society Newsletter.

For those who would like to 'have a go', why not adopt a book? Other similar Societies have greatly increased their collective knowledge of their subject's work by this method, and with a wealth of SBG's material available, this seems a natural extension for SBGAS. Our meets have already examined the settings of *Through Flood and Flame*, *Red Spider* and *Mehalah*, with future plans to feature *Cheap Jack Zita*, *Guavas the Tinner* and the Iceland-based books. There is every opportunity for us all to increase our knowledge and enjoy ourselves at the same time! New ideas are always welcome and perhaps a meet could be arranged around *your* specific area of interest. Another possibility is the use of workshops and for those living abroad, you do not need to feel isolated, with the availability of Internet smartgroups. (If in doubt, ask the grandchildren and they'll soon get you organised...)

I do hope that members not already engaged in some form of research will accept the challenge of adopting a book and just in case the same publication appears many times, perhaps you could supply a second choice?

I look forward to receiving details of all your areas of interest by 1st September, so that they can be listed in the October Newsletter.

Keith Lister. Address and e-mail inside front cover.

UNPAID SUBSCRIPTIONS

There is once again a long list of people who have still not paid the subscription that was due last October. You will find a note to this effect enclosed, if you are one of these defaulters. It hardly needs to be said that the Society has virtually no other income, and that the sum of £6 has been held steady for many years now. If everyone pays promptly, it is adequate for ongoing needs, but for nearly half the Membership to receive a year's free copies of the Newsletter is clearly

unreasonable. So **PLEASE PAY NOW**. and please pay again in October, without further reminder.

We do realise, however, that errors and confusions can occur. Some people pay for 2 or 3 years at a time, which can cause misunderstandings. Please forgive us if you've been wrongly accused!

BARING-GOULD TITLES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

This list is constantly expanding, and older titles are gradually being left out, to save space. There are, however, almost certainly some omissions. Bossiney Books and Llanerch are regularly producing books by or including SBG. If anyone is aware of additional titles, please let the Editor know.

"Myths of the Middle Ages" Edited by John Matthews. Hardback. Blandford 1996. New illustrations. £16.99

"Yorkshire Oddities, Incidents and Strange Events" Smith Settle. Paperback. 1987

"Lives of the British Saints" Llanerch. 1990 onwards. Various volumes.

"The Book of Werewolves" Senate 1995. Introduction by Nigel Suckling. Paperback

"A Book of Folklore" Paperback. Praxis Books 1993. £5.00

"Through Flood and Flame" Paperback. Praxis Books, 1997 £8.50