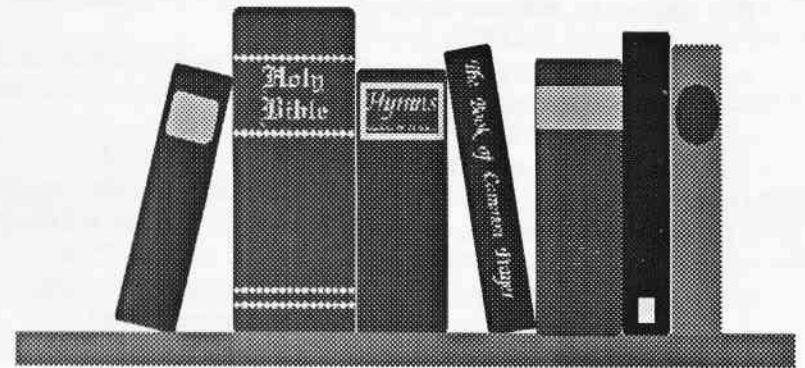


THE SABINE
BARING-GOULD
APPRECIATION
SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER NUMBER 37

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.

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- 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.

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Editorial

Autumn always seems to catch one unawares, doesn't it? Suddenly there are all those end-of-summer tasks shouting for attention. In the Society, we have to turn our thoughts to the Annual Gathering, paying our subscriptions, making plans for next year, resolving to read more about SBG, and write more for the Newsletter!

There have been several events recently which have contributed to the aims of SBGAS in various ways. The new Website, the publication of 'The Moor' in Britain, new Praxis reissues and the impressively energetic activities of the Wren Trust and Red Spider Company. There have not been many new members joining us this year, however, and I would ask you all to do your best to make some new recruits. Talk about SBG, lend out his books, and bring them in!

One nice little story - I had a letter from a lady in Richmond, who was searching for the text of SBG's poem 'The Building of S. Sophia'. I had 'The Silver Store' and copied the poem out for her. She was absolutely thrilled, and I was more than happy to have my attention drawn to a most enjoyable piece of verse.

Finally, in the light of the recent atrocious attacks on New York and Washington, we in the UK all sincerely hope that none of our American members lost loved ones or were personally hurt by these events.

Becky Smith

The Fenland Gathering October 2001

It isn't quite too late to join in with this year's annual Gathering. Ray Scott has compiled a spectacular programme for us, on the **13th and 14th October.**

If you are intending to be there, please be sure that Ray knows. He has to make advance bookings for several different elements of the weekend. His phone number is 01353 740817. There is an optional Sunday lunch in a local pub, which will probably cost about £12 per head, including drinks. Ray does need to know who will be staying on for that.

A brief repetition of the Programme, which appeared in detail in the last Newsletter:

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 - 12.45pm Prickwillow, following the Cheap Jack's route in the story. Stop at a 'River Bank' on the way. Coffee. Church.

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

2.00pm Book Sale, and 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.

Do please try and support this event. There is a great deal to see, and a chance to make Baring-Gould's writings come alive in one of the lesser-known settings of his work. Details of Bed and Breakfast accommodation are available from Ray. From receipt of this newsletter, there should still be time to join in. Remember, too, that this is the only opportunity to confront the Committee face-to-face, and suggest any changes to your Society.

The Dartmoor Gathering 2002

Friday 4th to Sunday 6th October 2002. Philip and Jane Weller have agreed to arrange a function room for the afternoon and early evening of the Saturday at The Dartmoor Lodge in Ashburton, and an optional group dinner to follow. Philip says "From our recent experience of holding our convention at the Lodge, the food and service are good, and the prices are very reasonable. We would also offer to arrange an ~~informal~~ discussion in the motel on the Friday evening, and to guide people to Guavas locations on the Saturday morning and on the Sunday morning and afternoon, with suitable lunch venues being available at the Lodge on the Saturday and in Princetown on the Sunday.

"We only received expressions of interest in a full-weekend hotel package around the AGM from six other members of the SB-GAS. We appreciate that many people cannot book that far ahead, but we cannot take on making the arrangements at this late stage, although we are still offering the excursions, but leaving it up to the individuals to arrange accommodation."

Website Launch

www.sbgas.fsnet.co.uk

The sound of champagne corks hitting the ceiling was muted but nonetheless enjoyable - sorry you couldn't be at the launch party but it was an exclusive do, held at a nice little restaurant near Porte St-Denis.

Seriously, though, the Sabine Baring-Gould Appreciation Society website (www.sbgas.fsnet.co.uk) is now open for business and, of course, for improvement. Let me know what you like, don't like, would like more of, etcetera and I'll see what I can do.

I would like to keep our 'regulars', in touch with what is going on and will, therefore, e-mail you when something new goes onto the site. My mailing list is quite short at the moment and I'm sure I've forgotten a few people. If you know other SBGAS members (or non-members you think may be interested) with internet access please forward this message to them.

Martin Graebe

Laurie King's 'The Moor'

Many of you will have seen, and even bought, the hardback American edition of *The Moor* by well-known crime writer, Laurie R. King. The book was reviewed in this Newsletter, about two years ago. It features Sabine Baring-Gould in the last few months of his life, being visited at Lew House by Sherlock Holmes, and Holmes's young wife, Mary Russell. The events giving rise to the story about the Baskerville family and their notorious Hound, have taken place some time previously. Holmes, however, has become aware of a further Dartmoor mystery, which is the reason for his visit.

The book is brilliant in its depiction of these three characters, and the

w

intry atmosphere of Dartmoor. It is, I believe, the only novel to include SBG as a character, and deserves a special place in our midst for that reason.

It is therefore an extremely welcome development that it is now to be published here in the UK. The hardback is to be available from HarperCollins publishers from this December, price £16.99. The paperback will follow at the end of next year. Please bear this in mind when it comes to Christmas shopping! It would be an excellent way of introducing friends and relations to SBG, as well as to the books of an extremely talented and enjoyable writer.

As a matter of interest, *The Moor* is one of a series of Holmes/Russell stories. The first is *The Beekeeper's Apprentice*, which I can strongly recommend, and there are also *A Letter of Mary* and *A Monstrous Regiment of Women*.

Becky Smith

Information Wanted

The following articles were written by SBG (some anonymously), but I have only seen them as printer's proofs in the Devon Record Office, Exeter. Does anyone know in which journals and what date any of them appeared?

"Aunt Joanna" (subsequently incorporated in *A Book of Ghosts*, 1904. pp353-366)

"Beaumont Ghosts, The"

"Black Joan" (not Red Spider)

"Brother's Wife"

"Brothers Wyvell, The"

"Colonel P's Ghost Story"

"Dr Chubb's Thumbpads"

"Fly, The"

"In the Sound of the Mill Wheel"

"Last Lucemores, The" (sent to *The Graphic*)

"Mermaids"

"Moor-Man, The"
 "Old Mail, The" (Adventure Series April 6th 1907)
 "Old Purvis"
 "Parish Clerk, The"
 "Personal Experience of the Occult" (?Church Times, p 173)
 "Ploughman, The"
 "Queen's Shilling, The"
 "Sea Poaching"
 "Strange History of Anastasia Robinson, The"
 "Tree of Life, A"
 "Tunkles"
 "Vanished in the Moonlight"
 "Village Doctor, The" (subsequently incorporated in *An Old English Home*. 1898.
 "Village Tailor, The"
 "Wild Kynaston"
 "Wild Men"
 "Wise Men of Gotham, The" 1904
 "Zachary Mudge: A Village Tragedy"

In addition, I recently saw a short article by SBG entitled *The Holy Grail*. This was a modern reprint (1976) by the Unicorn Bookshop, Carmarthen (apparently no longer in existence). It consisted of 24 pages and has the ISBN no. 0-856 59-030-4. The source of the article was not attributed and I have not been able to track it down amongst the SBG publications I have. Again, does any one know the whereabouts of the original article?

Iceland

Some of you might remember Martin Graebe proposing a trip to Iceland in August 2002, for any interested members. There was a show of hands at the 2000 AGM. However, Martin has now found that he cannot undertake to lead such an expedition next year, so the idea is shelved for the time being. The subject is likely to be raised at this year's AGM, if only to assess continuing interest.

Subscriptions

Last year, there was a noticeable reduction in the number of people paying their annual subscription, without being reminded (although it does turn out that some of you were mistakenly included on the NOT PAID list - for which many apologies). It is also the case that there is always a degree of confusion in the way the whole thing is timed. You are expected to pay in October, but are not definitely informed as to what the actual figure payable is, because the AGM has not yet confirmed this detail. This year, we're trying to make it all simpler for you. Pay £6.00 **now**, and even if the AGM does decide to raise the subscription, you will have had it at the old price.

For American members, please note that we cannot process cheques or money orders made out in dollars. If you can't arrange to pay in sterling, then a \$10 bill is the only acceptable method of payment.

Send your payment to the Treasurer: Sybil Tope, Point, Lew-down, Okehampton, Devon. EX20 4ED.

Still Getting Reviews!

Some of you might be aware of a splendid publication called 'The Historical Novels Review' which appears four times a year, and aims to review all historical novels published in the past few months. In May 2001, the new Praxis edition of *Cheap Jack Zita* was reviewed, as follows: "Here is another long-overdue reprint of a Baring-Gould classic tale of the Fenlands, a part of the country he immortalised in his novel *Mehalah*. It is set in 1816 against the background of the riots when the labourers rebelled against the farmers for paying lower wages when the price of corn fell. To Ely's Tawdry Fair comes the Cheap Jack in his gaily-decorated van with his daughter Zita. When he dies she ends up in the house of Hezekiah Drownlands, van and all. ...The brooding villanous Drownlands with his tigerskin cloak, rioting labourers, comical town officials and some bizarre local customs...make up the rich tapestry of this fast-paced novel. Present on every

page is the eerie drowned landscape of the fens and plenty of information about this unique part of the country. Satire, comedy and tragedy combine to make this a Dickensian tale replete with memorable characters, including another pair of Baring-Gould's tough heroines."

And as if that wasn't enough, in the August 2001 edition, there is a similarly admiring review of *Kitty Alone*. It ends: "There's far more than just a story in a Baring-Gould novel and anybody who thinks Victorian literature is wordy ought to contrast this with most modern novels. As with his other books, this is truly to be savoured and kept like a fine old wine."

Both reviews are by Rachel A. Hyde.

You can join the Historical Novel Society for a very modest sum (which I can't find, unfortunately). As well as the four Reviews, there are two editions a year of an excellent magazine named *Solander*. Contact Marilyn Sherlock for details. Address: 38 The Fairway, Newton Ferrers, Devon. PL8 1DP. E-mail ray.sherlock@appleonline.net.

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 folk-songs, 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

☐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.

DEADLINE FOR NUMBER 38

Please let me have material for the next Newsletter by 12th January 2002 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

The Baring-Gould Folk Festival and Study Break

This will take place from 22nd to 28th October. The Wren Trust have, amazingly, devised a completely new programme, so that anyone who attended the event last year will find a great deal that's new and different in 2001. The whole subject of folk music is enjoying an explosive surge of popularity, and there is something for everyone in this week-long festival.

You will have found a programme in last time's mailing. But if you've lost it, or wish to know more, information can be obtained by phoning 01837 53754. Or e-mail sbg@wrentrust.co.uk.

It bears repeating that our Society owes a great deal to the Wren Trust, and the Red Spider Company, for doing so much to promote and extend public awareness of SBG, through these tremendous local initiatives.

"My Dear Enys"

The John Enys Correspondence

This piece is intended to serve as a 'taster' for a more detailed presentation of letters written by SBG to John Enys of Penryn between June 1896 and February 1910. Eleven of them were

photocopied from the Royal Cornwall Museum collection. There are some more yet to be seen in the latter collection, although the Librarian, Angela Browne, reckons that there is little of interest in the remainder.

My intention is to provide transliterations of all the letters, if the RCM is willing to give permission to cover their holding, with annotations. At the moment there are still a tantalising number of interpretations to be made of SBG's handwriting, especially with regard to names and places and people.

The 25 letters to hand cover a wide range of subjects - although there is only one - oblique - reference to SBG's work in the parish (the requirement to be at Lew Trenchard for Harvest Thanksgiving week, when discussing dates for diggings), and one to his family (his plan to visit his daughter, conveniently residing near a location of interest for his current books.) Several letters discuss the identities of Celtic Saints and the opinions of earlier authors about them. Many of them are concerned with plans for archaeological digs or the results obtained; quite a lot about the accommodation arrangements - a sort of Egon Ronay of Welsh hostelries. Co-operation with other learned societies, fundraising, and overcoming restrictions feature in several letters. There is some interesting information about the St Clether Well Chapel, the *Red Spider* opera, and the progress of *The Book of the West*. Other random topics include the loan of books, the gift of plants, family coats of arms, the postal service, and frequently matters of health and - less frequently - the weather.

What a catalogue or even a description of the contents cannot convey is the personality, not to mention quirks, of the writer. While quite trivial to some, to others it may be fascinating to observe the way in which SBG manipulates his 'dear Enys' (once 'Dear Mr Enys' but not on the first occasion, strangely), partly by charm, partly by cajolery. By turns he can come on strong, or exhibit humble gratitude for some help or favour. When in exuberant mood SBG may insert a 'very' into his 'yours truly' sign off, occasionally preceded by 'I remain'. The

address - invariably 'Lew Trenchard, N. Devon' - and the date usually follows his signature (an unhyphenated S. Baring Gould'); once or twice it is found at the top of the letter. The conjunction 'and' is hardly ever written in full. There is an interesting abbreviation for Christmas (Xtmas), revealing its origin and meaning rather than hiding it in the algebraic unknown quantity, as I once heard the 'Xmas' version described.

But these are just samples; for the fuller flavour please wait patiently for further research to take place. Meanwhile if anyone has access to other John Enys letters - in either direction - I would be most grateful to hear.

David Shacklock

References in Print

Torquay, etc. Darlington's Handbooks. References, quotes and acknowledgements. pp 32, 92, 103, 119, 124f, 135

The Call of Cornwall. Frank Baker. Hale 1976. p. 143. ref "The Vicar of Morwenstow"

The Young Man. Vol IX, 1895. No. 105, Sept. "The Author of Onward Christian Soldiers: the Revd S. Baring-Gould at Home". pp 289-294. Includes 4 photographs, signed 'F'.

The Christian View of Science and Scripture. Bernard Ramm. Paternoster Press, 1955. p. 158. Ref *The Legends of the Patriarchs.*

Persons of Consequence. Louis Auchinoss. Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1979. p. 123. Gladstone's admiration of *Mehalah.*

Sunday at Home. 1897/8 .p. 97. Huymns for children; p.692, novels of Devon and Cornwall.

Folksong and Music Hall. Edward Lee. RKP 1982. p.30. SBG as folk music collector.

Essex Rich and Strange. Richard Pusey. Hale 1987. pp 152, 193.
Mehalah and the Rising Sun.

A Calendar of Country Customs. Ralph Whitlock. Batsford 1978.
p.51. Harehunting on Dartmoor (unattributed) *A Book of the
West:Devon*. 1899, p.204

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

“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

“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