

“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

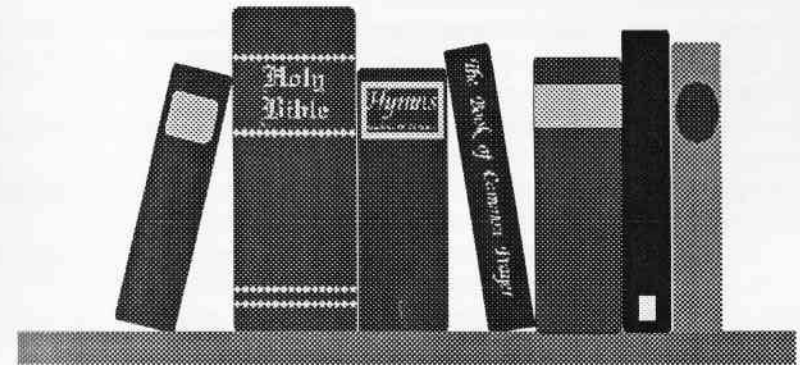
Literary Criticism:

“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

THE SABINE BARING-GOULD APPRECIATION SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER NUMBER 38

2002

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

President: *Dr Merriol Almond*. E-mail: Merriol1@home.com (That's Merriol followed by the number 1)

Chairman:: *David Shacklock*: Cheese Hill House, 27 High Street, Debenham, Stowmarket, Suffolk. IP14 6QN. E-mail: riley01@globalnet.co.uk

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

Hon. Treasurer: *Mrs Sybil Tope*, Point, Lewdown, Okehampton, Devon. EX20 4ED. Tel 01837 861315

East Anglian Representative *Ray Scott*, 40 Duck Lane, Haddenham, Cambs. CB6 3UE. Tel 01353 740817

North Country Representative and Research Co-ordinator *Keith Lister*, 13 Grove Road, Horbury, Wakefield, W. Yorks. WF4 6AG. E-mail keith@listerk.freemove.co.uk

South-West Representatives: *Martin Graebe*, 100 Cheltenham Rd, Gloucester. GL2 0LX E-mail: martin.graebe@btinternet.com

Liaison with Lewtrenchard Church: *Mary Rolfe*, Foxcombe Cottage, Lewdown, Okehampton, Devon. EX20 4PM. Tel 01837 861510

Newsletter Editor: *Becky Smith*, Crossways Cottage, Walterstone, Herefordshire. HR2 0DX. E-mail author@rebeccatope.fsnet.co.uk

• 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

Accounts of the Ely
Gathering 2001 2

Please Note... 3

A Tall Story 3

It Never Goes Away 4

L'Archeologue amateur
Anglais et la Villa Gallo
Romaine 6

Iceland 10

www.sbgas.fsnet.co.uk 10

Deadline for Number 39 11

Things to buy 11

References in Print 11

SBGAS Transactions 12

The Broom Squire 12

Editorial

Firstly, may I wish all our Members the very best of everything for the year 2002. We have all been battered by the various traumas of last year, and I get the feeling that the quieter pleasures of Baring-Gould appreciation have become somewhat side-lined recently. On the other hand, it is often a consoling and salutary experience to re-read works from previous ages, and to discover that the crucial preoccupations of human beings really haven't changed very much over the years.

A new century can hardly help but be a time of reassessment and change. In our various ways, perhaps we're all going through some such process. Certainly there are many issues about the place of different faiths in the world order, which SBG would perhaps find familiar. We have evidence from much of his writing that he gave a lot of thought to these questions.

We have two reports of the Ely Gathering last October, which complement each other perfectly. Those who did not manage to attend will be left in no doubt that a very varied and instructive weekend was enjoyed by us all.

Becky Smith

Two Accounts of the Ely Gathering

In October we had a fascinating, most enjoyable weekend in the Fens, immersed in the atmosphere and environment portrayed by Baring-Gould in his 1894 novel *Cheap Jack Zita*.

Thanks to the hard work and brilliant organisation of SBGAS member Ray Scott, a Fenman born and bred, we visited the area in front of Ely Cathedral where Zita and her father would have peddled their wares in the opening chapter of the book; the embankment where Runham and Drownlands might well have had their fight to the death; we followed the trail the rioters took round Littleport which is a critical part of Baring-Gould's narrative. Lastly, we had a most entertaining lecture from Chris Jakes about the Reverend Kingdon, vicar of Prickwillow, with whom Sabine may have stayed while he was researching and writing this book, and who loved having his photo taken! And that's just a few of the things we saw and did.

As well as having the novel brought alive for us, we also learned a great deal about the history of the Fens, ate like royalty and even met a lovely Shire filly called Zita whom Jewel might well have resembled at the same age! The weather was unseasonably warm and sunny, which only added to our enjoyment of a full and memorable weekend.

Helen English

Three and a half months after the event, memory of the details is fading, but there can be no doubt that the 2001 SBGAS Gathering was right up to the usual high standard of organisation and enjoyment. The Fens have their own special appeal - different from Devon and Yorkshire - and the opportunity to see the landscape and learn about the 'management' of the Fens was a stimulating experience for those new to the area, as well as providing the setting for one of SBG's most vivid novels: *Cheap Jack Zita*,

which was the central theme of the weekend.

Ray Scott, together with Shirley and his team, had put a lot of loving thought and effort into the event, and the outcome was much appreciated by the 25 or so members and friends who were there. The visit to the pumping station (sounds dull but it was fascinating), the 'live lecture' on Ray's shire horses (connected to the theme by the name Zita having been given to one of the horses - in defiance of tradition, we were gleefully informed); the thoroughly researched and wryly entertaining talk on the Vicar of Prickwillow; and the guided tours of Ely and Waterbeach - as well as the usual feeding, book purchasing, Society business and chit-chat - all contributed to a most enriching weekend.

While Dartmoor and Iceland vie for our future attention, 'Ely' will long be cherished - with Baring-Gould's Cambridge still left for another day.

David Shacklock

Please Note...

...*The Devonshire Association, Literature Section's* meeting on March 16th, Bowhill, Exeter, 2.30pm. is entitled 'Steven Hawker, Vicar of Morwenstow' by SBGAS member, Patrick Hutton.

A Tall Story

From "Essex Countryside" Magazine

Many people interested in Mersea must have read the Rev Sabine Baring-Gould's novel *Mehalah*... He was rector of East Mersea and with great imagination and knowledge wrote his story about a vivacious girl and the melodramatic adventures she had on the island and elsewhere. Ray island, mentioned in the book, is a real place, near the Strood. Baring-Gould brings to life scenes of the salt marshes and inlets and way of life of those times.

David (Mussett) told me of the time when his long-gone relative "Sooty" Mussett went wildfowling with Baring-Gould and how he recounted those experiences afterwards to a pub full of astonished listeners who sat spellbound.

The tale went that "Sooty" ran out of shot, so he filled his muzzle with tin-tacks. 'I fired at all these pigeons in the tree and nailed them to it,' he said. 'After about four minutes they all took off, taking the tree with them!'

Apparently there were quite a few wild tales similar to this that the drinkers enjoyed... Whether they believed them or not is another matter.

(From an Article by Bill Bowen-Davis, sent by W.L.Rothon)

It Never Goes Away

Many of our members will be aware of the 'bowdlerisation' of SBG's masterpiece, 'Onward Christian Soldiers'. Ray Scott noticed an article about it in the *Daily Mail* of 17th November 2001, paraphrased as follows:

Churchgoers have been uneasy about the overtly militaristic words, on and off for decades, and the latest objection comes from a Revd David Herbert, vicar of two Cheshire parishes.

He makes reference to the Taliban and other fundamentalists of various faiths, and questions whether people in today's churches wish to identify with the 'triumphalism' of the hymn as it was originally written.

He therefore proposes the following substitution for the first four lines:

*Onward Christian pilgrims,
Hearts and voices raise,
Till the whole creation
Echoes perfect praise.*

Roger Bristow has provided some further researches on this topic: The book *Abide with me: The World of Victorian Hymns* by Ian Bradley (1997) published by the SCM Press contains several references to Sabine Baring-Gould, mostly in connection with *Onward Christian Soldiers*.

The first (p. 104) states that SBG was prevailed upon by the compilers of the *Fellowship Hymn Book* to change the phrase 'one in hope and doctrine' to the rather more accurate 'one in hope and purpose'. Similarly, the editors of the 1904 edition of A. & M. persuaded him to alter 'we are not divided' to the more accurate 'though division harass'.

On p.213 there is reference to Thomas Hardy's *Two on a Tower* in which

the choir of the village church struggle to get to grips with *Onward Christian Soldiers* which the parson has begun to sing 'in notes of rigid cheerfulness'. In the Wessex edition of this novel, published in 1912, 30 years after the original edition, for reasons unknown, Hardy substitutes Tate & Brady's version of the 53rd psalm to the tune *Devizes for Onward Christian Soldiers*.

P. 241. Because of its militaristic language, several churches have dropped *Onward Christian Soldiers* from their hymn books, including the Presbyterian Church of the USA in 1989, the United Reform Church in Britain in 1991 and the Anglican Church of Canada at its 1995 Synod. Other not wanting to lose the tune, have sought to rewrite SBG's great pilgrim hymn in a more acceptable contemporary idiom. Bishop Derek Rawcliffe produced a version for the twentieth anniversary festival of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement at Southwark Cathedral in November 1996 which began *Onward Christian homos*. David Wright offered a pacifist version in the aftermath of the Falklands War:

*Onward Christian pilgrims
Working hard for peace
Day by day we're praying
That all wars may cease.
Christ our royal master
Bids us love our foes;
Do good to those who harm us,
And violence oppose*

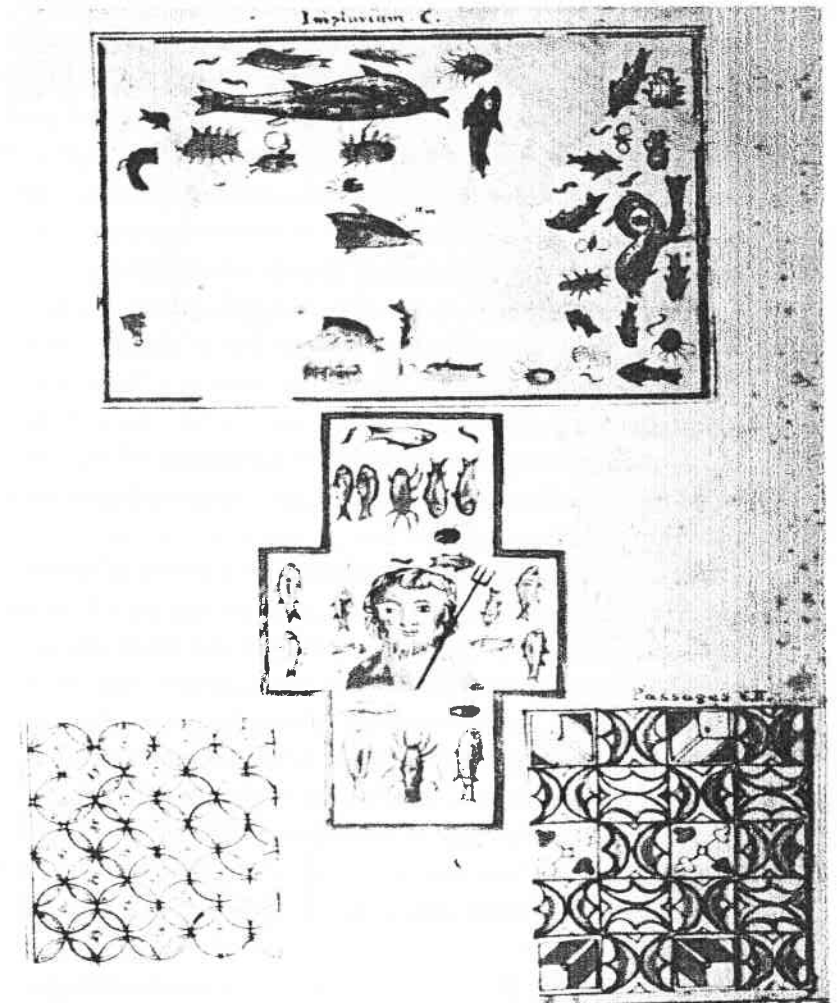
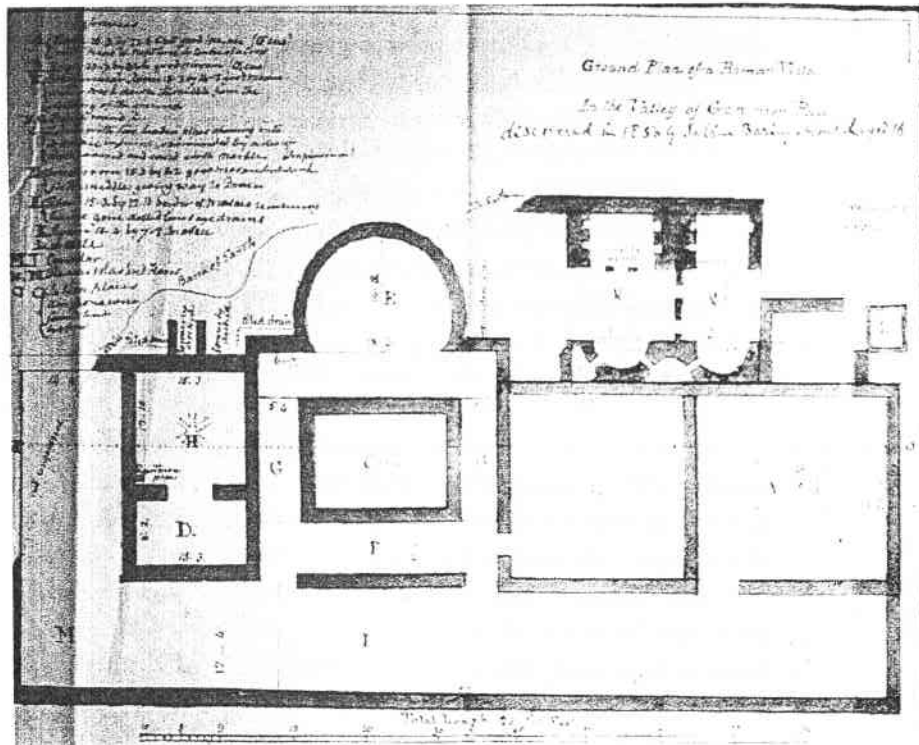
Bradley goes on to say that the trouble with this sort of exercise, however worthy and well intentioned, is that it ignores and destroys the message and integrity of the original. *Onward Christian Soldiers* is a great poetic expression of the (highly orthodox and biblical) idea of the church militant. It is about moving onward in faith rather than standing still, engaging in the world rather than withdrawing from it, and proclaiming the unity of Christians rather than parading their differences.... Its language is not so much directly militaristic as carefully and calculated allegorical and metaphorical – 'like a mighty army' and 'marching as to war'. It also speaks very directly and positively to those many souls in our fractured and broken society who do not have to contend with evil forces and demonic influences.

Roger Bristow

L'ARCHEOLOGUE AMATEUR ANGLAIS
ET LA VILLA GALLO ROMAINE

SBG gives two versions of his discovery and excavation, at the age of 16, of a Roman villa on the left bank of the river Neez at Gan near Pau in the Pyrenees.

In his *Book of the Pyrenees* (1907) he relates how having already heard the peasants romance about a *Palais des Fees* which lay underground in a field, he discovered numerous cubes of mosaics in a ditch. The peasant proprietor of the land told him that five years previously he had uncovered a picture showing men sitting about a table drinking and playing cards. He was persuaded by SBG to allow him to cut a 150ft trench parallel to the river bank; in this trench he discovered walls and mosaic pavements of a



villa. The land owner then agreed that if he could charge 2 sous at the gate for admission SBG could continue to excavate the villa.

Whereas in his autobiography *Early Reminiscences* (1923) he wrote that it was whilst he was digging up flower roots in a little

lane leading out of the road to Gan that he discovered cubes of mosaics. The farmer told him that there were whole pictures in beautiful colours underground and he went on to demonstrate this by taking a pick and spade and by digging a couple of pits north and south at a distance of a hundred yards, he revealed some mosaics. Agreeing that the farmer could charge at the gate should anything be discovered SBG cut a trench between the two holes. Within 2 weeks he had excavated several rooms of the villa, and uncovered many mosaic pavements.

The account of his excavation, the difficulties he encountered with the French, and the subsequent fate of the villa differ in the 2 books; but both clearly show that there was little *entente cordiale* between SBG and the local dignitaries! In both books SBG mentions another villa on the right bank of the Neez, which was not in such a good condition and he quickly abandoned his attempts to also excavate this.

Details of his excavations appeared in a series of articles in the local newspaper *Memorial des Pyrenees* during 1850, and a full account of his excavation plus his plan and paintings of the mosaics was published in the *Illustrated London News* in June 1850. SBG writes in his autobiography that the drawings of the mosaics were lost by his son Henry who had taken them to show a London linoleum firm. However Martin Graebe kindly passed on the information that in one of the SBG boxes at the Devon Record Office there was an album containing both the *Illustrated London News* article plus some small water colours of the mosaics.

In September 2001 a holiday in the Pyrenees included 4 nights at Pau in search of the Roman villa. Before arriving at Pau we visited Oloron Ste Marie (Roman town of Iluro), the town's great glory is the Romanesque doorway of the Eglise Ste Marie with its wonderful biblical scenes, and it is also famous for making the classic French beret. What was going to be a quick visit into the local Museum, La Maison de Patrimoine, produced an unexpected find. The main display panel in the museum contained part of a Roman mosaic and showed SBG's plan of the

villa with details of his 1850 excavation.

There was also the seemingly incorrect statement that after his excavation the site had been left open to the elements and thus to its destruction, rather than SBG's version which basically was that the French took over the responsibility for its care and immediately neglected it. Whatever the absolute truth of the matter the sad fact is that by the 1880s the villa had completely disappeared

In the late 1980s a new housing estate was built which involved diverting the course of the river Neez over the remains of the villa which was mentioned by SBG on the right bank of the river. Unfortunately archaeologists were not involved in the early stages of the work; consequently much damage was done before archaeologists from Pau University were called in. The excavation report is due soon but it seems this villa, which also contained many rooms full of mosaic pavements, formed the other half of the villa which SBG had excavated 140 years earlier, with the river being the central feature of the complex. This is most unusual in terms of Roman villa design and indicates that this was a magnificent villa of high status. It will certainly be mentioned in future archaeological publications.

One of the mosaics lifted from the right bank villa is the one on display at the Musee de Patrimoine at St Oloron. Two more are displayed at the Co-operative Cave at Gan (where wine produced in the Jurancon area can be sampled). One of the mosaics is depicted on a wine bottle *Le Vieux Caveau*. It is an excellent wine.

I met several French archaeologists and historians who knew the name SBG, and not just in the context of the villa excavation. As he relates in his autobiography, whilst at Pau he found and indeed excavated several prehistoric sites in the region, one at the age of 13. In 1851 he had an article published in *Archaeologia*; the subject was *An Ancient Camp near Bayonne* in which he totally disagreed with the local antiquaries' interpreta-

tion of the camp. Extracts from his *Early Reminiscences* describing the family's time in Pau, have been published in *Revue de Pau et du Bearn* (1986).

I can well see why Pau was so popular with the English in the nineteenth century, it is an elegant and lively town and there is still a certain Englishness about it. Perhaps it should be considered as a future venue for a SBGAS gathering?

Jane Marchand

Iceland

The trip to Iceland originally proposed by Martin Graebe in October 2000 is still under discussion. Possible formats for such a trip and approximate prices are available from Martin or Roger Bristow, and anyone seriously interested in joining such an expedition should make themselves known to one or other of these Committee members.

www.sbgas.fsnet.co.uk

You will all be pleased to hear that the web site has been updated with a new newsletter (with photographs!) including brief reports on last year's events. There is also the first full listing of books for sale from Roger Bristow. There is also a picture of the award that Wren Trust were presented by the Dartmoor Society.

News is always welcome - if I have enough I'll even do another newsletter!

I am sure that there are more SBGAS members who have e-mail addresses. Do please get yourself onto my mailing list, by e-mailing me at: martin.graebe@btinternet.com.

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 39

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

References in Print

Ghosts of Essex. Betty Puttick. Countryside Books, 1997, pp53f. Roman centurion and legions.

Islands of Essex. Ian Yearsley. Ian Henry Publishing, 1994; refs, pp 51, 53, 73, 117, 119

The Old-Time Parson P.H.Ditchfield. Methuen 1920 (originally Sept 17th 1908) p 163f; an eccentric parson, churching of women, visiting habits; p. 167 animal exorcism and its sequel; p. 245 'Parson Hogg' (quot); p. 248 *Old Country Life* (quot); p. 250 Froude's marriage (op. cit).

SBGAS Transactions

Those who have attended the annual gatherings of the Society will know that a great deal of scholarship has been presented at those meetings, and it is a shame that this material has not been made readily available to all members of the Society or permanently recorded. Philip Weller has offered to produce copies of the material from such meetings which is suitable for publication in an inexpensively printed format in an annual publication which is to be entitled "The Transactions of the Sabine Baring-Gould Appreciation Society", in commemoration of the many contributions which SBG produced for "The Transactions of the Devonshire Association". The new "Transactions" will be published, at cost, in an A4 format (double the page size of the "Newsletter"), with card covers, suitable for storage in a loose-leaf binder to create a permanent record of some of our activities. It is planned that the first, and possibly the second, of these collections will be available in the Summer, and these will cover the material presented at the Autumn 2000 and the Autumn 2001 meetings respectively. If any members have copies of material which they presented at earlier meetings, then these could also be incorporated in the series. Further details will be included in the next issue of the Newsletter, but any immediate enquiries can be addressed to Philip at: 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hampshire, PO14 3RU, UK, or at p.weller@btinternet.com

THE BROOM SQUIRE

Having played the villains in Tim Laycock's dramatisations of 'Red Spider' and 'Kitty Alone' and spent so much time researching Sabine Baring-Gould's life, I was very disappointed not to be able to visit Surrey in September last year to make the acquaintance of the broomsquire in John Owen-Smith's adaptation of the renowned novel which Baring-Gould set in the Devil's Punchbowl.

Fortunately for me the play proved such a success that popular demand led to a rerun this year and so it was that on 22 September I was to be found sitting on a wooden bench in the Ship Inn, Thursley, while the tragedy was played out around me. Well, to be honest, it wasn't really the Ship Inn, but the little village hall in Thursley where the very simple scenery and the way the cast involved the audience 'en promenade' made it very easy to imagine

yourself back in the self-same village 200 years ago. I felt this even more so when, during act 2, I was enrolled as a member of the jury which, reluctantly, found Matabel not guilty.

The play moved forward at a cracking pace and with sustained tension, as it vividly portrayed the desperate isolation of a charity girl destined to be exploited by almost everyone she encounters in a most hostile setting. John Owen-Smith is to be congratulated on the play he has written and, along with Steve White, directed. No special lighting was used and Steve took pride in telling me that the Company was able to set up and, later, derig the hall in 30 minutes, so that the play could be taken to six different villages around the Punchbowl in two successive weekends. Most impressive.

It was wonderful to see how much the local people felt they owned 'The Broomsquire' in much the same way as Bratton people own 'Red Spider' and it was marvellous to meet the descendant of a real broomsquire then, next day, visit the tombstone of the unknown sailor whose murder inspired Sabine to write the novel and to see the little wooden 'Dame School' at Thursley which he, too, must have seen and where he had Matabel live out her days.

Ron Wawman

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