

TAVISTOCK SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

AT THE MORRAB LIBRARY IN PENZANCE



SUMMER 2015

JOHN & SUE DAVIES

AN APPRECIATION



Between them they have clocked up an incredible 75 years of service to Tavistock Subscription Library, but now Commander John Davies and his wife Sue are having to take a back seat, at least for the time being. Since an unfortunate fall at home, Sue has been hospitalised for quite a while now, at first at Derriford and more recently in Tavistock Hospital. John has had to take time out to visit, and we hope soon when Sue returns home again to help her convalescence

there.

Their association with the library began immediately after they returned from America. Our first record of them is in September 1978 when Sue paid her subscription (just £3 in those days!). John turned this into a “family subscription” (at £4) the following year.

A few years later Sue became Secretary and Treasurer, succeeding Betty Williams. One of her first achievements was to get the committee’s reluctant approval for the installation of an electric socket. To defray the cost of this extravagance, she volunteered to organise a coffee morning on Friday each week – a much appreciated opportunity for members to get together, continued today by Brenda and Graham Kirkpatrick, with (until her accident) Sue officiating once a month and usually contributing a greatly admired home-made cake to the fare on offer.

In the mid 1990s, John took over as Chairman when poor health forced Jim Thorington to step aside. Between them John and Sue transformed the library. During a major refurbishment of the premises, it was Sue who researched the availability of the original William Morris design Sanderson wallpaper, and had it rehung here. In an Exeter antique shop they found and purchased a pair of ceiling lights of exactly the right period. From their home they brought furniture, including a Georgian side-table. John has lovingly tended the fabulous mantel clock (roughly Regency period) that adorns the fireplace – and still winds every week!

John himself is an expert craftsman in wood, and has contributed both our lectern and, most recently, a handsome bookcase made-to-measure to house our important complete collection of *Transactions* of the Devonshire Association. A great handyman, John has saved us a fortune over the years, fixing safety-film on the glass doors of all our bookshelves, fixing and constantly repairing our door-lock, painting the new ceiling (after the original one collapsed and had to be replaced), taking turns (with Juliet) vacuuming the carpet, and a hundred and one other jobs around the place.

It was Sue who proposed in 1989 that we should join the Association of Independent Libraries, becoming its smallest but 6th oldest in the country. We were founded in 1799, and to help celebrate our 200th anniversary the Association held its AGM in Tavistock in 1999 – an event ably organised by Sue and attended by delegates from all over the UK.

We should also record our gratitude to the Davies family for the good work put in by their daughter Rebecca, who trained as a librarian at the Bodleian and for a while after the death of Margaret Cook served as ours – significantly advancing the computerisation of our catalogue and helping to bring us into the 21st century.

John announced he would not stand for re-election as Chairman at our recent AGM, and nominated Brian Fyfield-Shayler to succeed him in this position. John, however, remains on the management committee and as a trustee. The example he and Sue have set, and the experience they can share, will continue as an inspiration to us all long into the future. We wish them better health, good fortune and happiness – and look forward to seeing Sue back at our coffee mornings (with or without her cake!) as soon as she is able!

Brian Fyfield Shayler (Chairman)

EDITOR'S NOTES

Since the last newsletter there have been various changes in the committee. John Davies has stood down from his position as Chairman, but is still on the committee. Mary Freeman, who has been Vice Chairman for several years and a member of the Library for a very long time, has also stood down from the committee. She should be thanked for all the work she has done. She has been quite invaluable with organising the books, advising on purchases and repairs and innumerable other aspects of the Library. She has also tended the little garden outside. Thank you Mary. Our thanks too to John Tunnicliffe who has stood down from the committee. He has ably represented the Writing Group for many years and he is succeeded by Felicity Luckman. Graham Kirkpatrick has also stood down from the committee but is still very much involved keeping us well supplied with coffee and biscuits every Friday and making sure that the Western Morning News is ready for us to read in the Library every morning and the Tavistock Times each Thursday. Please carry on Graham. We would find it almost impossible to do without you.

NEW MEMBERS

The membership at present stands at 93 paid up members. We would like to extend a warm welcome to our new members, and those who have rejoined. They are Mr Roger Skinner, Mr Graham Collins, Mrs Elizabeth Hagan, Mr Graham Skinner, Rev Margaret (Peggy) Salmon, Mrs Jennifer Tinker. We hope that they will enjoy and benefit from their membership and will make good use of the Library. We also hope to see them at some of our Friday morning coffee mornings

HONORARY SECRETARY'S NOTES



Library Open Day on Saturday 9th May 2015

Graham Kirkpatrick is once again to be thanked and congratulated for organising another excellent Open Day at the Library on Saturday 9th May with coffee and tea and informative chat and explanations to our visitors. A steady trickle of folk came through the doors, sharing their visits to our quiet corner of Guildhall Square with the Museum. Ably assisted by Juliet, Josie, Brian and Simon amongst but a few we increased our membership encouragingly with more folks taking application forms to complete later. Thanks to Graham for another great initiative raising the profile of the Library in the Town and West Devon.

Library Website - Book Reviews

We have now built a page on our website for Book Reviews. If members are passed a book to review then that piece can be published online for reference to the book. All reviews can be emailed to Simon Dell Hon Sec at simondell1958@yahoo.co.uk for conversion onto the website page. A photo of the cover would also be nice and equally once reviewed we would ask for the review copy to be lodged in the library.

A WORD FROM THE TREASURER



“The receipt of 2015/16 membership subscriptions has started well and the costs of administering the library are well contained. The funds now stand at well over £7000 which gives the library the opportunity to purchase additional old and new books. All suggestions should be put to the librarian.

LIBRARIAN'S NOTES



Over recent months our funds have enabled us to purchase two new and interesting books which will be useful additions to the Library.

Mills On The Teign by Martin Bodman pub. 2014

Forests of Dartmoor by G.D. Rowe pub 1964

Some members have very kindly donated the following books.

'A History of St Stephen's Priory, Launceston' by Terry Faull pub 2014 donated by the author.

Brian Fyfield - Shayler donated three volumes of The Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries 1948 - 1949

Kenneth Day's 'Eden Philpotts on Dartmoor' pub 2002

Bryan has generously replaced A.Mettler's 'A Devon Gem. The Bedford Hotel' 2013.

The Writers Group donated 'Dedication' Poetry by A. Mervyn Prosser pub 2014

Lydford History Society donated The Devon Historian Vols 71 -76 inc.

Mary Freeman kindly continues to donate The Devon Historian . This keeps our collection up to date.

Anonymous donations were left in the Library of the Plymouth and South Devon and East Cornwall

Committee Reports -1948 - 1954 also Tavistock Hospital Reports 1887 - 1946

We have been able to fund the re binding of the following books . They were in a poor state of repair and important to our collection

Walter White's 'A Londoner's Walk to The Lands End' pub 1885

A Handbook for Travellers in Devon and Cornwall pub 1865 Anonymous

R.N. Worth's History of Plymouth pub 1871

Classified Index to the Transaction of the Devonshire Association 1862 - 1885

[I would like to thank Juliet Hill for donating the boxes to contain the transactions of Devonshire Association]

Please ensure that books are returned to the correct place by using the markers provided.

Thank you for your cooperation.

If any members have suggestions for new books suitable for the Library please leave details in the notepad on the desk

VISIT TO MORRAB LIBRARY AND THE PENLEE GALERY IN PENZANCE

Although not enough members wished to visit the Morrab Library to make hiring a bus worthwhile it was arranged for Simon and Juliet to take their cars and so eight of us enjoyed a splendid day visiting first the Penlee Gallery, where there was an exhibition of the Newlyn painters.

In the afternoon were given a most informative guided tour of the Morrab Library. The Morrab Library is one of the largest independent libraries in the country, with over 40,000 volumes. It houses a marvellous collection of collections which it has gradually acquired since 1818, one of which is the only copy in Britain, a collection of 3,000 Napoleonic memorabilia; a wealth of Celtic and Cornish books; and a photographic archive of 10,000 negatives and prints. The building, a fine Victorian mansion is set in

delightful gardens, with its current magazines and reference books, is especially sunny and welcoming.

It was a delightful visit and the staff were really welcoming and even provided us with an excellent cream tea.



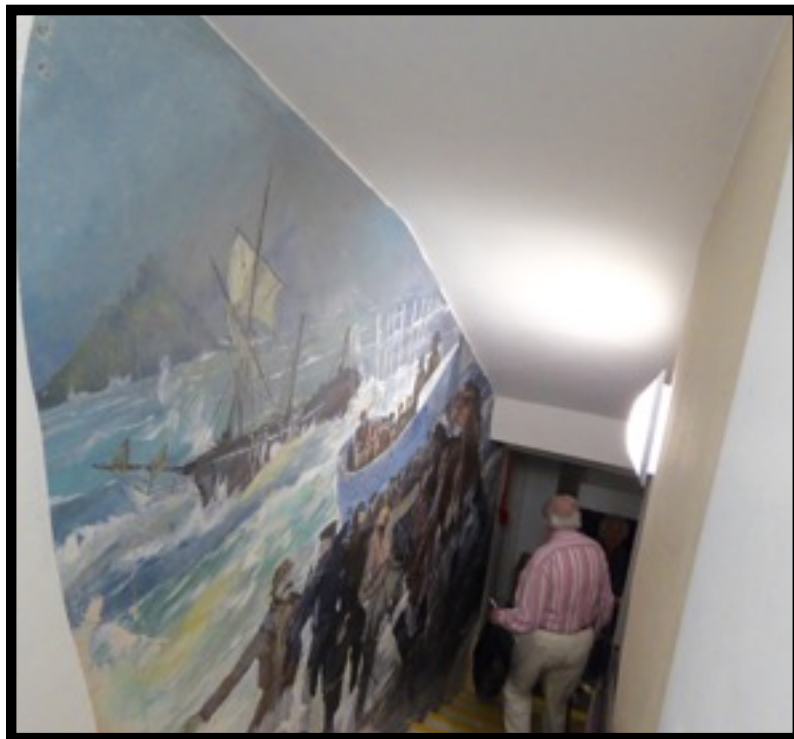
The Penlee Gallery



The Reception Room at the Morrab



John Killingbeck examines the books



Brian descends into the depths

MISCELLANEOUS

Library Website: www.tavistocksubscriptionlibrary.co.uk

The website has been recently updated with the index and catalogue of books online which can also be searched.

At a recent committee meeting the Chairman took a few moments to propose that the Library present a hamper to John & Sue Davies in recognition of their combined lengthy service and significant contribution to the Library over many decades. This was unanimously approved and both Brian and Shirley Rose would organise that.

Brian also reported that his correspondence with Virginia Noonan in Australia was ongoing in respect to her researches into William Merrifield and his family.

As the **Library lighting** was causing concern Simon has recently bought some powerful bulbs and this has made a great difference.

A **new computer** has now been installed. The library catalogue is on it but please be patient while the data from the old computer is put on and a filing system organised.

VISITS

Following the success of the Morrab visit Simon has come up with a possible visit to Exeter University Library to see the Heritage collections - Heritage Collections manages collections of archives, manuscripts and book collections which are too rare, old or fragile to be kept on the open shelves of the library. *He says that they have the Henry Williamson estate collection now... but then coming from Appledore I'm totally biased!* A date and time for this visit could be arranged for later on this year.

A visit has been arranged to visit the Plymouth Athenaeum on Thursday 8th October. Details will follow in due course.

If other members have ideas for visits please let Simon know and maybe several outings can be arranged. If enough members show interest then hiring the TASS bus is a possibility but that does mean a definite commitment!