



Association of Independent Libraries Newsletter

Summer 2008

JOHN GALE

It is with sadness that we report the death of John Gale, Treasurer of the AIL, on 15 April 2008. John represented the Tavistock Subscription Library on the AIL Committee from 1999 and took over as Treasurer in 2006. He was a man of great warmth and humour who brought fun to all meetings he attended. He kept us to the point when sometimes we drifted too far from our agenda. He was always keen to suggest new ideas or new ways of doing things. His practical, organized approach was ideal for the post of Treasurer. He will be very greatly missed.

AIL ROADSHOW RETURNS TO LEEDS

Our 19th annual meeting took place in Leeds over the weekend Friday to Sunday 13-15 June 2008. The Leeds Library was hosting the annual meeting for the first time since 1994. There were sixteen member delegates together with our president, Robert Anderson. We were particularly pleased to meet Christiane Kroebel from our newest institutional member – the Whitby Literary & Philosophical Society.

Proceedings began in relaxed fashion with a reception in nearby Mill Hill Chapel on Friday evening. Mill Hill Chapel's minister from 1767 until 1773 was Rev Dr Joseph Priestley – of oxygen discovery fame – who was also first secretary of the new library in 1768. The reception was hosted by Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society and John Lydon, secretary of the Phil & Lit, welcomed everyone and gave a potted history of Leeds. Tony Cleminson of Mill Hill Chapel helped run the reception and generally helped with weekend preparations.

The annual meeting proper was held in the Leeds Library on Saturday. George Whitehead welcomed delegates and then Robert Anderson presented his presidential address in which he expressed concern that access to historic material was becoming more difficult and expensive. Geoffrey Forster gave an illustrated history of the Leeds Library and the morning session concluded with a talk by Robert Barnard on the art of crime writing. Lunch was served by members of library staff and a tour of the library was provided by Claire Buckley. The agm followed during which the chairman, Geoffrey Forster, paid tribute to John Gale, our treasurer who died suddenly in April. After the agm, Christopher Webster led a walk around Regency Leeds. On the walkers' return, they enjoyed a 'Yorkshire' cream tea.

The weekend came to a conclusion on Sunday morning when remaining delegates were first served coffee in the library and then went on a walk around anti-slavery Leeds led by Janet Douglas.

GF 2008-07-07

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SYBIL CAMPBELL ON THE MOVE

The British Federation of Women Graduates Sybil Campbell Library moved last summer to the University of Winchester as a result of the sale of the premises at Great James Street. It has become a collection within the library there under the charge of the university librarian, David Farley. The University of Winchester has a strong department in the History of Women's Education, led by Prof. Joyce Goodman. We expect that the library will be actively used by students. To encourage this, an annual prize is offered for the best dissertation using the collection. A university sub-committee now manages the collection, chaired by Prof. Goodman with representatives of each faculty, the librarian and the two Trustees of the BFWG Trust Fund, who represent BFWG and monitor the expenditure of the interest accruing from the fund for the benefit of the collection. Guidelines for future deposits have been drawn up and plans are in hand to digitalise material to facilitate its use in research.

The tradition for holding library lectures continues. The next SCL lecture will be held at the University Women's Club in London on 18th November 2008. Prof. June Purvis will speak on 'Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928), leader of the suffragette movement in Edwardian Britain'. Contact Dr. Stephanie Spencer stephanie.spencer@winchester.ac.uk.

At Winchester, a strong branch of BFWG keeps a close interest in the collection. Members help with necessary work on the books. We feel its future is secure in their hands.

You can view our web-site and browse the catalogue at www.sybilcampbelllibrary.org.uk

M R 26.6.08

CHARITY AND CAKE FOR THE LEEDS LIBRARY

The first week in July was a momentous one for the Leeds Library on two fronts.

On Tuesday, 1 July, the Leeds Library, owned and run by its proprietary members since 1768, was converted into a charity. This followed many months of hard work, a court judgement and a crucial meeting last February at which proprietors voted 342 to 11 for the conversion. Charity number 1114386 did not follow Bromley House Library and the Morrab Library but decided to keep the old name. It did follow those libraries and many others by becoming an educational charity dedicated to making its wonderful collection and building available to people both locally and beyond. Membership of the AIL is one means of doing this. Another is an initiative with local schools to give children of senior school age a chance to visit and, where possible, to use the library.



On Friday, 4 July, a birthday party was held for members of the library to celebrate the two-hundredth anniversary of the library reopening in its new purpose-built premises in Commercial Street. 120 people visited in the afternoon for a birthday tea party to which the library's President, George Whitehead, welcomed them. No significance should be read in to the 4 July date. Back in 1808 it happened to be the first Monday after the old lease on the premises in nearby Kirkgate expired.

GF

10th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS FOR THE ARMITT

There was a party on the afternoon of Saturday, 19 July 2008 to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the new Armit Library and Museum in Ambleside. Geoffrey Forster attended on behalf of the AIL together with Emma Marigliano of the Portico Library (Manchester). The party was held in the beautiful house and garden of Clare Brockbank at Staveley, near Kendal. Claire, a retired trustee of the Armit and one of its most stalwart supporters, was instrumental in both preserving the old Armit Library and obtaining the Heritage Lottery Grant that made the wonderful new institution possible. Another key player, Peter Browning, the then chairman, spoke of the energy and determination needed during the campaign to find suitable premises for the Armit's wonderful collections and of the invaluable support of HRH The Prince of Wales who took a personal interest in the project.



The Armit Library is a longstanding member of the Association of Independent Libraries and is based on a subscription library, founded in 1828 of which William Wordsworth was an early member and John Ruskin and Harriet Martineau were active supporters at the end of the 19th century. This library was amalgamated with the library of Maria Louisa Armit and became the Armit Library in 1912. It now houses over 10,000 printed books on the Lake District and the people who have lived there. There are important manuscript collections connected with people such as John Ruskin, Harriet Martineau and Charlotte Mason. Perhaps the most important of these is a collection of over 400 watercolours by Beatrix Potter of fungi, fossils and Roman archaeology. There are also archaeological remains up to the Roman period discovered in the area.

PLYMOUTH PROPRIETARY LIBRARY

NEWS FROM PLYMOUTH PROPRIETARY.

Inspired by the AIL Training Day in Ipswich last September, we have been trying new methods of promoting the library and increasing/retaining members. To this end, in January we started a monthly Book Club and in March we held a Book Sale/Open Day. We are taking every possible opportunity to participate in events in our local community and had stalls at the inaugural Mutley Greenbank Festival in May. We have also started having more regular evening talks on literary topics.

Plans for the celebration of our bicentenary in 2010 are already in progress and this is further spurring our publicity efforts. We are also looking forward to establishing closer links with sister libraries in the Southwest.

This year we have had to say farewell to our Librarian John Smith who retired at the end of May after eight years service. Well done, John and thank you for all your hard work. Shirley Lamerton, one of our Assistant Librarians has taken over the post and we wish her well.

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SELF HELP

Mechanics Worldwide '09

This will take place from the morning of Thursday 24th September 2009 to the late afternoon of Monday 28th September 2009 at the Bath Royal Literary & Scientific Institution. It is devoted to Athenaeums, Literary, Scientific and Philosophical Institutions, Schools of Art and Workingmens' Institutes. It is the sequel to the highly successful meeting "Mechanics Worldwide '04" held at Swinburne University, Melbourne, Australia in September 2004. The short title **Self Help** given to the meeting is recognition of the popular Victorian writer **Samuel Smiles**, whose seminal book with this title will have been published 150 years ago in 2009. The book contains many ideas and aspirations embodied in the present meeting. The meeting is strongly supported by the United Kingdom Association of Independent Libraries.



This is an international meeting and we anticipate delegates from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, the United States of America and elsewhere as well as the United Kingdom. It will contain a series of lectures from high profile speakers and will also provide an opportunity for delegates to participate with shorter talks and poster sessions. It is envisaged that sufficient time will be made available for participants to see around the city of Bath, a World Heritage City, as well as the surrounding area. Bath is situated in a very beautiful part of South West England in an area rich in cultural and historic associations. Excursions to some of these sites are planned.

The registration fee for the conference will be about £60 (sixty pounds sterling). This **does not** include the cost for accommodation, lunches and excursions although. It will include morning and afternoon tea and coffee. Bath has many excellent restaurants and other eating facilities to cater for all pockets. Those interested in taking part in the meeting should contact the organisers of the meeting on e-mail: mechanics@brlsi.org or by writing to Mechanics Worldwide '09, Bath Royal Literary & Scientific Institution, 16-18, Queen Square, Bath BA1 1HZ. The conference will be limited to around one hundred participants.

Peter Ford

===== AIL EDUCATION =====

The AIL ran two very successful event in the past year:

Throw open your doors: strategies to evolve and survive, 29th September 2007.

A well-attended meeting at the Ipswich Institute addressed three major issues for member libraries, each presented by a lead speaker - partnership with other organisations (Jessica Gardner, Devon & Exeter Institution), meeting the Public Benefit open access requirements of the Charities Act (Hugh Pierce, Ipswich Institute - slides available from library@ipswichinstitute.org.uk) and membership recruitment strategies (Carol Barstow, Bromley House Library).

Co-operation, Friday 18th Apr 2008. Nineteen delegates attended a meeting at The London Library to discuss ways in which AIL members might better share their library resources and make them known to the outside world. Topics discussed included inter-library loans, cooperative cataloguing schemes, improving publicity, privileged access for AIL members and joint public initiatives. A report of the day's proceedings is available from Carol Barstow at enquiries@bromleyhouse.org.