



LANGTON MATRAVERS LOCAL HISTORY AND
PRESERVATION SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2019

For a variety of reasons this is the first Newsletter of 2019 so it is important that we begin by paying tribute to Reg Saville MBE without whom there would be no Society and no Museum.

It will perhaps come as sad news for those of you who live far from the village and have had little recent contact with the Isle of Purbeck to learn that dear Reg died last February.

He is a huge loss to our community and a very difficult act to follow.



Reg led a very varied and full life but arguably his greatest legacy to the village was the development of the Museum and the creation of our Langton Matravers Local History and Preservation Society.

In 1971 the inaugural meeting of the society was held at Leeson House and almost immediately three members who had their own collections of local bygone artefacts, documents, and photographs brought their collections together for an exhibition at Leeson one Saturday.

This proved very popular and within a short space of time hundreds of other items were received, leading to a collection which grew to in excess of 22000 items by the end of the Twentieth Century...all meticulously catalogued by you know who!

Clearly there was scope for a museum and in 1974 Reg, with the help of Jim Bradford, opened the Parish Museum in a small room opposite the Post Office which had once been a Butcher's Shop and then Sunnyside Dairy!

Seven exhibitions of village life were mounted in sequence and such was their success that when the Quarrying and Stonemasonry Exhibition was about to be taken down in 1989 there was so great a public outcry that the Society

leased the former Coach House and Stables from the Parochial Church Council and the museum as we know it now was born!

The rest is history. The Purbeck Stone Museum and Langton Matravers Museum gained National Accreditation and really is a gem that receives great praise from its visitors.

We really must honour Reg's memory by doing our best to keep it going.

But Reg's contribution to Local History was not just the museum!

He was a man of immense erudition...even if from time to time it was felt that what he didn't know he made up!!! In fact Jim told me that on one occasion during the interval half way through one of his talks in the Village Hall about the geology of Purbeck he went up to Jim and whispered 'It's all a load of nonsense, you know!'.

Be that as it may...Reg's scholarship was remarkable.

- He wrote around forty books for the Society, many of which needed huge research on geological and medieval topics, causing him to spend countless hours in the archives of Dorset County Museum.
- He transcribed the inscriptions on all the tombstones in the Churchyard and the Old Cemetery and this has proved invaluable to people researching their family.
- He produced more than twenty-five genealogical charts of local families.
- Mention an old village family and off the top of his head he could give you chapter and verse going back for several generations.
- Until very close to his death he gave up to six talks a year on behalf of the Society and was often invited to perform elsewhere.
- He led guided walks throughout the parish from North Hill to Dancing Ledge and Acton, the last only two years ago at the age of 94!
- He organised coach trips each summer to various places of interest in Dorset, stopping en route to give a brief talk about a village or a notable person who lived there.

The list of what Reg did could go on and on and there should be little surprise therefore that in 2004 he was awarded the MBE for services to local history.

But, as always, Reg did not want a fuss and refused to go to see The Queen at Buckingham Palace...so the insignia came almost to him at home in Langton and was presented by the Lord Lieutenant of Dorset in a 'local' ceremony!

Had he actually gone to meet Her Majesty it would have probably given her a bit of a shock because she wouldn't have been able to get a word in edgeways. He'd probably have embarked on one of his outrageous stories...given either in Dorset dialect or the posh voice he reserved for posh people!

Outrageous stories? What...Reg?

Who will ever forget the scandalous tales he would tell either in one of his talks or on meeting him in the street!

Who will ever forget the amazingly funny and sometimes rather naughty characters he would portray as part of the annual vaudeville shows he would put on at Christmas...my own favourite being Reg as a deaf old man with an ear trumpet!

Reg the Scholar was unrivalled for what he knew, what he discovered, and what he taught us about Langton Matravers and the Isle of Purbeck...he truly could be spoken of as Mr Langton! No-one will ever know more about the village and its forebears than he. We have lost an unparalleled and irreplaceable source of knowledge.

Reg the Man was passionate about achieving his goals and prepared to work hard to be sure to gain the success he was seeking.

- He was a great actor and a wonderful musician and teacher who loved nothing more than to play to his audience...but perhaps to some extent this was some kind of a ploy which shielded him from the world.
- He was also a very good friend to many...but woe betide you if you crossed him

- He was articulate and a great fighter for his many causes
- A man of immense wit and humour who would amuse and sometimes irritate in equal measure
- A man of sincere religious faith who was at times troubled by the direction his Church seemed to be moving
- A man who lived his life in a precise kind of way...but what a wonderful life it was.

Reginald John Saville MBE will be greatly missed.

No more will we see him walking the streets of the village in his black suit, black coat, and black hat, and probably carrying a black bag...but that image will remain with all of us who knew him, and he will not be forgotten.

**Reg was one of a kind.
The mould has been broken.
It cannot be replaced.**

But we must rejoice that for most of his 96 years he lived here with us in the village he loved.

The Purbeck Stone Museum and The Langton Matravers Museum with Reg on his way home [having avoided The King's Arms] in a painting by Judy Robson whose subject is unmistakably Mr Langton!



THE BARTON BEQUEST

It is with great pleasure and huge gratitude that we are able to confirm that Reg has bequeathed his bungalow in The Hyde and all its contents to the Society.

It is important that we pay tribute to the Saville family for the crucial steps they have taken to ensure that Reg's wishes are met and the kindness and understanding they have shown to representatives of the Society at what is a difficult and challenging time.

The family is still awaiting a Grant of Probate, and this is likely to result in a further delay of weeks if not months, so Barton has not yet become the responsibility of the Society. But when this happens the Management Committee will face an enormous but welcome challenge and it will do all in its power to ensure that as far as possible the spirit of Reg's bequest is honoured.

The Committee will keep you informed, but for the time being there is little to report because, quite frankly, there is much to think about before we can move towards any decisions being taken.

AN IMPORTANT STATEMENT

This statement has already been published in two editions of The Dubber and in the Swanage Advertiser as well but it is essential that the message it contains reaches far and wide, especially amongst current members of the Society!

What follows is of great importance to both the Langton Matravers Local History Society, its members, residents of Langton and the surrounding villages, and the public at large.

For many years, mainly under the auspices of the late Reg Saville and through his commitment to the village and local history, the LMLHPS has been the repository of thousands of artefacts, documents, photographs, and books, the majority of which have been donated outright to the Society.

The Management Committee of the Society is however aware that a substantial number of items which it has in safe keeping have been loaned to the Society on a temporary basis and are catalogued as such in the Society's archive.

Some of the 'archive' is displayed in the Museum but the rest is stored in a rented flat in Palafox in The Hyde where Reg spent many hours maintaining his meticulous records.

The Society now has to face a huge problem following the sad recent death of Eileen Hibbs, the owner of Palafox and therefore 'our landlady'. The Executors of Eileen's Estate understandably require the Society to clear and vacate the premises as soon as possible and we have now been given Notice to Quit!

The Management Committee is currently investigating where might be the best place for archive to be re-housed and once a decision has been made it will need to undertake the considerable physical task of moving home, taking care that all that is stored is subsequently able to be found! It is greatly to be hoped that Reg's catalogues will prove to be accurate!

That is why the Society is making this statement.

*It would be very helpful if people who know that they have **loaned** something to the Society now come forward to stake a claim, not necessarily a claim for the property to be returned during the move but at least to re-affirm that they, and therefore the Society, are aware of the nature of the agreement under which the property is held.*

*To that end the Society asks all who have **loaned** items to the Society and wish to re-inforce their ownership of the items to write now to the Chairman of LMLHPS, David Selman, Priest's Barn, Belle Vue Farm, Swanage BH19 2SQ giving full details of the items in question so that they may be cross-referenced to the catalogue.*

No action is necessary if you are happy with things as they are!

Please treat this as a matter of urgency and in order to ease the burden on the Management Committee ensure that letters reach David Selman by Monday 30 September 2019.

PHILIP WYATT: PRINTER AND WEBSITE GURU!

It is with great sadness that we give thanks for the life of Philip Wyatt, also in his nineties, who died a few days after Reg.

Philip was a stalwart worker on behalf of the Society for many years and printed the numerous books that Reg wrote. They were a team who did not always see eye to eye, having tussles about whether or not a semicolon should be a full-stop and so on, but together they always got the job done.

Like Reg, Philip will be a difficult act to follow.

He was also responsible for the Society website which can be said to have been resting during the course of this summer.

However, we are delighted to re-assure the members that by next season a new website will be up and running, thanks to the enthusiasm of a member who actually lives far to the west in foreign parts ie Cornwall! In this day and age such a vital colleague as a website manager does not need to live on the doorstep but, it seems, can be more or less anywhere in the world! So, thanks to Martin Kenway for stepping into the breach!

Martin has many ideas of his own, but if there is anyone else who would like to give a hand by suggesting things that may not have been thought of then please do send an email to David Selman who will be pleased to bridge the Tamar on your behalf! 'The more the merrier' as is commonly said!

THE MUSEUM: APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2019

We had hoped that as a kind of tribute to Reg the Museum would be really busy in this season but it so happens that footfall is only very slightly up on last year...perhaps we'll get a few coach parties in September to bring our visitors up to the twelve hundred mark which would be great!

As far as donations and sales go, with four weeks left till we close, we have taken £1880 as against £1830 in the whole of 2019 which isn't too bad...but it is surprising how many holiday-makers come out with no money at all in their pockets for an ice-cream, the use of a public toilet, [or a donation to our great little Museum]. It's amusing, too, the frequency with which custodians hear the words 'I'll be back to give you something later' [hoho] or skidaddle at great speed when the volunteer's back is turned!

That's enough carping! By and large the visitors who do find the Museum are full of praise for the interest it generates and the information it conveys, and demonstrate this in the comments they leave in our Visitors' Book. Actually, those who are closely associated with the jewel in the crown of Langton, are proud of how it is looking right now: please do try to squeeze in a visit before the end of the month!

'A wonderful exhibition which I have thoroughly enjoyed'

'Congratulations. The Purbeck Stone Museum is a gem that I have been so pleased to find'

In no small way, though we are fully aware of the inspiration and hard work of those who have gone before, this is the result of the hard work of the current Curator, Richard Cottrell, and all the volunteer Custodians to whom we give huge thanks. Without them.....[space left for readers to draw their own conclusions].

AUTUMN AND WINTER PROGRAMME OF TALKS

The full programme has not yet been finalised so although we have the dates fixed the 2020 talks will be announced later.

All talks take place in the Village Hall and begin at 7.30pm. With one exception, admission for members is £2.50 and for non-members [who are very welcome] it is £3.50.

Friday 4 October 2019 **[change of date]** **Raise a Glass to Reg [see below]**

Thursday 24 October 2019 Stewart Timbrell **Discovering Dorset**

The Rev Stewart Timbrell will present a very interesting illustrated talk on places in Dorset which you may or may not have found for yourselves: come and discover places of which you have no knowledge!

Thursday 21 November 2019 Jessica Sutcliffe **Helen Muspratt: Photographer**

Born into an army family in India in 1907, Helen Muspratt was a lifelong communist, a member of the Cambridge intellectual milieu of the 1930s, and a working mother at a time when such a role was unusual for women of her class. She was also a pioneering photographer, creating an extraordinary body of work in many different styles and genres. Helen Muspratt became very well known in Swanage. Following Helen's death in 2001, her daughter, Jessica Sutcliffe, became increasingly aware of her mother's importance in the history of twentieth century photography and the talk will give a fascinating insight into an important artist.

Thursday 19 December 2019 John Patrick **Shopping in Bygone Swanage**

John Patrick is a popular speaker in Langton and this is a 'new' talk in which he will explore the wide range of shops in Swanage before the wide-scale arrival of supermarkets and chain stores! Oh for the days of Robsons the Grocer whose salesman came out to the villages on his motorcycle to take weekly orders for delivery the next day; or Mr Bruton the Ironmonger whose van came to Langton to sell a wide range of goods but especially paraffin which kept the stoves burning and smelling in the winter; or Louise, the 'huge' fashion emporium in Station Road which offered many a Swanage girl a chance to be a catwalk model in their regular Fashion Shows.

Thursday 30 January 2020 **To be confirmed**

Thursday 27 February 2020 **To be confirmed**

Thursday 26 March 2020 Islay Cooper **To be confirmed**

Thursday 23 April 2020 **Annual General Meeting**

RAISE A GLASS TO REG

Admission will be free for this Meeting on Friday 4 October but there will be no complaints if donations are pressed into the Treasurer's grubby hand to help defray expenses!

It will be an informal occasion characterised by a glass or two of bubbly [no less] but as Reg was not much of a drinker, apart from a glass of sherry before lunch on Sunday, there will be a soft option to go with a range of snacky-things to enable everyone to maintain a degree of sobriety.

Reg's unmistakeable voice will be heard and there will also be a few things said by people who knew him well...and if anyone else would like to chip in with an impromptu memory then that will be most welcome.

It will be an informal 'soirée' [Reg would like that description even though it may prove to be something of an over-statement] that will give members and friends the chance to share thoughts and have a laugh about and with someone who played such an important part in the life of the Society, Museum, and Village!

As an added draw, a once in a lifetime opportunity, there will be no need for you to go home empty handed.

The Saville Family have given their warm support to there being a small display of books, china, porcelain, paintings, and small artefacts from Reg's home: items that he collected and treasured throughout his long life in the village.

They will be available as items to buy at a set price in some cases, but for the most part they may be taken as a memento of dear Reg in return for a donation regarded by the taker as reasonably appropriate for the objects chosen...but we do hope that no fights will break out if there is competition for the Mona Lisa!

Reg's brother, David, has said that he so much likes the idea of the occasion being such a warm celebration of his brother's life that he hopes to make the twenty-five mile drive from Upwey to be present: but he also said 'I'm getting on a bit, you know!' Let's keep our fingers crossed!

THE LMLHPS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

It may be of interest for you to know the names of those who try to keep the Society and Museum moving forward, especially at this hugely important time in its history!

Chairman	David Selman	[and Treasurer and Membership Secretary]	
Secretary	Mary Haysom		
Curator and Archivist	Richard Cottrell		
Publications	Colin Garner		
Custodians	Jasmine Cattle		
Members	Pam Bradford	Jim Bradford	Keith Coombes
	Jan Marsh	Rosemary Stevens	
Website [on-line member!]	Martin Kenway		

But we have a problem! Just look at the list of committee members and try to work out how many of them are **not** aged nearer one hundred than fifty! You get the message?

It is a rapidly ageing group and we have an urgent need for younger people to come forward and make sure the Society thrives as the inevitable takes its toll.

If anyone is interested in becoming a member of the committee then do please get in touch because, to some extent, it is a question of the more the merrier...and that will become even more obvious as the years go by!

So much these days seems to depend on volunteers and many people [including members of our committee] seem to volunteer for several different organisations and charities without which things would grind to a halt.

We really are grateful for all the help we get from local people in many different ways, especially as vital custodians, but in the end it does come down to the same old few who keep things going...and it is the 'old' few!

This plea would better be made outside the scope of this Newsletter which will go nationwide to the membership, but if you feel that you can offer the Society some time then do please call 01929 421481 and have a chat...but do approach the subject gently to avoid giving the person on the end of the line a heart attack. Alternatively, it wouldn't take much research to find an appropriate email or snail mail address to use instead!

WANTED! IN CONNECTION WITH WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE AND WHAT COMES NEXT!

Someone who would be interested to take on the task of 'promoting' the Museum to increase number of visitors and, as a result, the income from sales and donations.

We could of course throw money at it, but the cost of placing adverts and buying space in magazines, publishing and distributing flyers, and renting boards such as those outside the Swanage Tourist Information Centre on the Seafront would, in any given year, wipe out our income from the Museum...and that doesn't really make much sense, especially in the short term. Perhaps it's short-sighted on our part to hold back from shelling out?

So...we do have a serious need for someone to come forward and say 'I'll do that for you'!

ASSET RICH! CASH POOR!

What follows now may be considered by some to be absolute madness but no apology is made for raising what is a huge and very serious problem.

Reg's wonderful bequest of his house to the Society is remarkably generous, beyond the wildest dreams of similar organisations.

But, think beyond the initial euphoria and consider the longer term situation.

Suddenly our small village Society is a property-owning organisation and, wonderful though that is, with ownership comes responsibility.

Let me mention a few potential costs that are specific to Barton. For example, gas central heating; electricity; water; plumbing emergencies; upkeep of the garden to avoid neighbours' complaints, and fence repair; legal costs; security alarms to safeguard the archive and artefacts; insurance of a non-residential building; general maintenance; potential repairs to the structure, roof and gutters, and possible damp; dealing with an emergency that nobody can forecast; possible contributions to the repair of the private road in which the property is situated.....and no doubt a few others that you can add for yourselves!

Now think about how much this could add up to in any given year and you may agree with me that the financial viability of the Society could soon be under threat if expenditure escalates without the support of increased income.

We need to plan now for the unexpected rather than find ourselves desperately trying to come up with a solution against the clock when 'the worst' happens.

That is why the Society must create a Barton Legacy Fund that is kept totally separate from the day-to-day running costs of the Museum and the Society itself which are already barely covered by annual income, and sometimes not!

What is proposed is that we appeal to the membership for interest-free loans, or out-right gifts, which will be used solely and exclusively to enable the Society to supplement Reg's fantastic generosity by caring for Barton without the expense of Barton jeopardising the future of the Society itself.

All contributors to the Barton Legacy Fund would receive a financial review of the fund following the Annual General Meeting of the Society: this would give details of how much remains in the fund and the use to which outgoings have been put.

Any loan would be re-payable on demand with a maximum of six-months notice [to enable the Society to make suitable arrangements for the money to become available] for repayment. In the event that at some time in the future Barton is sold, all loans still held in the Barton Legacy Fund would be repaid in full on completion of the sale. Any out-right gift would be eligible for Gift Aid against income tax if the donor does in fact pay income tax.

This has been a difficult appeal to write but I cannot see how we can avoid this request for financial support!

At its base is the fact that although on Grant of Probate the Society will be given a property worth around £250000 or more, it does not have sufficient funds to support that gift. Yes, asset rich, cash poor is a perfect description.

Do please consider the Barton Legacy Fund very carefully and find enclosed a separate form which enables you to respond if you feel able. Contributions large and small will be welcome. A total fund of £10,000 would be amazing!

We really do need your help on this, and already someone has come forward with the promise of a loan of £1000.

ZUNDEE MARNEN IN LANC'N

A poem in the Langton Matravers version of the Dorset Dialect written in January 1983 by RJ Saville recalling aspects of life in the 1930s when pupils from the several boarding schools in the village processed to Church and became the butt of the village boys who envied them!

MEMBERSHIP

This is just a gentle reminder that annual subscriptions are due on 1 September 2019 and it would be a matter of celebration and delight if this rather tedious [for you!] administrative matter is got out of the way by the end of the month, using the enclosed form and envelope!

OH DEAR!

Sadly, twenty-four subscriptions for the year just ended remain unpaid but there will be no naming and shaming!

We hope the arrival of this Newsletter will serve as a bit of a prompt and bring any miscreants back into the fold because we hate to lose members!

Your support keeps us going by making the Society feel worthwhile and valued!

That is why you are receiving this missive free, gratis, and for nothing!

This Newsletter is the sole responsibility of DFS on behalf of LMLHPS and any errors or omissions are his and his alone!

'Bout fifteen minutes 'vore helem
The wole church bell begun de clang
'An all at oonce the villeege street
Iz villed wi bwoys, a marchin' gang,
Grey-suited an' wi' coloured caps,
Zum green, zum blue, zum purple,
Be-ine a lot wi' zgarlet caps
Vrum Dumverd Schoo-wull, drew the harch
An' in the door, and zoo da zet
In rows ov 'ooden-zeated chairs
As cut thee back vernigh in 'aif.

Then suddenly the pa'son blaes
As harg'n, bell an' chatter zdop,
"We sing one seven five...the hymn
Er...*Kinking Congs Their Titles Take.*"
'An choir-bwoys, riskin life ur limb
Vell in, a-wicker'n, da thur zdalls,
As Jimmer Ball's mustache blew hout
In indignation at the zound
Ov Dorus Bower's crazy shout,
"I zee thee pokin' fun at !!"
'An Annie Cupper's trembling made
Dree diffurmt pairs o' glasses shyek:
Vur any thing 'ud myeck she 'vraid.

Venite, Psalm, Te Deum zung,
Da chaints be Harnol' ar be Cooke,
All zet, da yer the roarin' voice
A' Tommy Pellatt read the Book
Lar' 'ow 'uh bellered, "Og the King
Of Bashan" an' the like; an' all
That yeard ne'er moved a wink
Vur veard. The lesson done, uh'd vall
Zraight hout the door da git 'is gin,
Zo missed the qui-er's shibboleth,
The Caleb Simper anthem, zung
Be 'eart 'almost..." He watereth
The Hills"...in operetter zdyle.

Wole Taddy rendered Common Pray'r
Habzurd be zdrage henzerions like,
"Almighty God stop rustlin' there!"
The crafty TP alzoo missed
The zermon vrum the hanyule roun'.
When 'Ester Chapman picked 'er nose
An' taisted what she there 'ad voun'
Across the quoire a bwoi-ulled zweet
Wuz shot vrum
Bert ta Heever Nunn.

Then, aider one mwore noisy zing
We'd all be gout an' vree da run
An' eye the Leeson gels gwoin pas',
Ur poke fun ut the neighin' drawl
Ov Hupper Class. Almighty God
Wuz 'ardly worshipper there at all!

The picture painted here by Reg will be familiar to many of the older residents of the village, some of whom may actually have just been in the Church choir at the time.

Most of the dialect can be deciphered through the context in the case of more difficult words. I was particularly pleased to decide that 'harg'n' was in fact the organ that would have been played that day by Bea Saville, Reg's mother!

Durnford School gets a mention, as does its very eccentric headteacher, Thomas Pellett [TP], who clearly liked to give the sermon a miss in favour of rushing home for a gin...probably not his first of the day, nor the last!

Reference is also made to the somewhat prim young ladies of Leeson School who were kept on a very tight rein when they ventured out of the school grounds, but nevertheless were much enjoyed by the village boys [if not the girls!]

The Parson of the day was the Reverend Ernest Tadman, who served from 1916-1946, and the fact that he is affectionately referred to as Taddy indicates that he was held in high regard in the village, though 'the hanyule roun' alludes to the fact that alledgely his sermons were re-used very year in strict rotation!

As for Jimmer Ball's 'mustache'...even I as a young boy in the village in the 1950s remember it as a splendid creation which was particularly impressive when he, and the country dance 'team' in the Village Hall, tripped the light fantastic to the point, even, of winning national competitions in the Royal Albert Hall!