



LANGTON MATRAVERS LOCAL HISTORY AND  
PRESERVATION SOCIETY

# NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2017

The Committee hopes that you will find something of interest in this Newsletter because it is the result of a significant amount of time on the parts of those responsible for printing, for addressing and stuffing envelopes, and for putting them through local letterboxes...but we do rely on the Royal Mail for those who live some distance away because as yet we have found nobody prepared to walk farther than Wareham! So a big thank you to all who give a hand or two in the interest of keeping in touch with members!

To mention someone by name tends to be invidious because there are always others who may say 'Why him? Why not me?' but Philip Wyatt is someone who really does deserve our thanks...coupled with the embarrassment of the entire membership knowing that he will be ninety on 7 September!

For many years Philip has been responsible for printing the books published by the Society and for maintaining our website. This has meant him liaising very closely with Reg Saville who has written almost all of our publications [there are another two in the final stages of preparation] and subsequently ensuring that text and photographs fit the pages in an attractive and logical way before the press rolls. It sounds very straightforward but it is something to which Philip has devoted many hours, and now that he has decided to switch off his printer for the last time [except for occasional special reprints] it is right that we let him know how greatly his vital work has been appreciated and express our warm thanks. Given the historical nature of the Society we should perhaps create The Caxton Award just for him.

We will continue to sell our publications because Colin Garner has kindly agreed to take over the role of Printer in Chief, for which we are very grateful.

## Meetings and Talks from September to April

The programme now relies heavily on external speakers because dear Reg can no longer commit to the burden of getting to the Village Hall to continue to entertain and educate an audience which remembers with great enthusiasm the many highlights of past years for which he has been responsible.

The programme for the season is as follows, and all the meetings take place at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. Most of them are on a Thursday evening and though it is unfortunate that for some people this regular day is inconvenient the Society needs to dovetail its Village Hall bookings with other groups who hire our popular venue on a weekly basis!

### Thursday 28 September 2017

Steve Etches, the driving force behind The Etches' Collection and the impressive new Jurassic Museum at Kimmeridge, will talk about how he moved from being a plumber to becoming a world-renowned palaeontologist with a fascinating insight into the development of his collection and how he set up the museum following a huge fundraising effort..

### Thursday 26 October 2017

Luke Dady, who is a project archivist involved in Unlocking the Bankes Archive, will give a talk on the Bankes family in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, which has a focus on Purbeck together with an overview of the project as a whole. The Bankes family lived in Dorset from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and owned the Corfe Castle and Kingston Lacy Estates. Their documents comprise 25,000 individual items stored in eight hundred boxes so Luke will be able to find much to interest his audience when he visits us.

### **Thursday 23 November 2017**

How Langton Won the War! As promised, following the unfortunate need to cancel his visit last year because he was stuck in hospital in the Falklands with severe pneumonia, having had to abandon a cruise to Antarctica, Dr Phil Judkins will travel from Harrogate to give a presentation on the development of radar in Langton Matravers and Worth Matravers. Do please attend to make his long journey worthwhile.

### **Thursday 21 December 2017**

Details of the evening will be finalised nearer the event but we hope that it will feature a talk on Christmas Shopping in Langton in the 1950s followed by mulled wine and mince pies before a brief recital of William Barnes's poems given by 'you know who'!

### **Thursday 25 January 2018**

Mike Walshaw, for many years involved with the Swanage Railway as a signalman, will talk broadly about the history of the Swanage Branch Line from 1885 to the Present Day including revelations about the recent link to the national rail network at Wareham. Our only regret may be that the railway could not be diverted via Langton with a station outside the Post Office to provide hourly trains to London!

### **Thursday 22 February 2018**

This sees the return of John Patrick, a Swanage resident who is well known to regular patrons of 'the Langton talks'! John's subject on this occasion will be 'The Churches and Chapels of Swanage' and if you start to count them you will need more than the fingers of two hands.

### **Thursday 22 March 2018**

Jeremy Waters is coming to Langton for the first time following the very enthusiastic recommendation of a member who heard him talk elsewhere. His subject will be 'The Flying Boats of Poole Harbour 1939-1948' and his talk tells the story of the ten years when this country's only international airport was the water of Poole Harbour.

### **Wednesday 14 March 2018 [10.30]**

Briefing Meeting for museum custodians old and [fingers crossed] new!

### **Thursday 26 April 2018**

Annual General Meeting

## **We are looking for...**

...sponsors for our meetings!

Now that the Society has to go beyond the village for new people to give talks we often have to offer a speaker's fee to help cover expenses and provide a small donation for the charity which the speaker represents. This, together with the costs of hiring the Village Hall, means that our talks sometimes barely break even.

It would be a great shame if for that reason the LMLHPS had to reduce its programme and it has been suggested that small businesses or even members and local residents may be willing to sponsor a meeting by donating say £100.

If that is something of interest please contact David Selman [selman@globalnet.co.uk or 01929 421481] who will be delighted to hear from you.

## **End of season sale!**

Our excellent museum situated just behind the Church has decided to have an end of season sale from the date you receive this newsletter until 30 September when it will close for the winter.

There is a lot to see, including a fascinating exhibition on the development of radar in the village provided by Phil Judkins so do, please, spend a few minutes having a look round to ensure that the volunteer custodians do not drop off to sleep through inactivity!

As for the sale...admission will be free: but it will not escape the notice of our canny members that one of the perks of membership is that they can already visit the museum as often as they wish without paying a penny! Another perk is reduced admission to our monthly talks between September and March!

## **Membership of the Langton Matravers Local History and Preservation Society [LMLHPS]**

It's that time again. Our membership year runs from 1 September to 31 August so unless you are a member who 'invested' in our new Membership for Life scheme it is now time for you to pay your subscription for another year. It would be very encouraging for the Committee and Treasurer if you do this as soon as possible, preferably by post to

David Selman [LMLHPS], Priest's Barn, Belle Vue Farm, Swanage BH19 2SQ

with cheques payable to LMHPS.

Subscriptions have not been raised for many years but we are grateful that many members generously add an additional gift to help the Society.

Single Membership	£5.00
Family Membership	£7.50
Membership for Life	£100.00

In 2016-2017 the Society had 120 members and we were delighted that of these no fewer than 22 had sufficient confidence in LMLHPS to become Members for Life, thus providing a welcome boost for the Society's coffers when things were tough!

Sadly, however, fourteen members did not renew their subscription in the year just ended and we hope that this was just an oversight. The Society values your membership and does not want to lose anyone.

For that reason we are pleased to send the non-renewers this Newsletter but promise not to hassle you after this.

If your subscription is in arrears then you will discover a red cross here .....! We hope it does not surprise or embarrass you too much! It will be fantastic if you decide to renew NOW by sending a cheque to cover the last membership year [2016-2017] and the new year beginning 1 September 2017. Please make a decision to do just that this very day! We look forward to hearing from you.

The no-hassle promise means that if you decide not to renew by 31 October 2017 we will assume that you have 'resigned' and not send you any further mailings: but that would be a shame!

## **Museum 2017**

2016 was the museum's best season for a good number of years but unless the footfall increases considerably in the next three to four weeks 2017 will fall short by quite a long way so please encourage your friends, neighbours, and visitors to drop in.

The pattern of the last seven full years is shown below, the amounts being the totals of annual admission and sales.

<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>£2,419.56</b>	<b>£1,765.65</b>	<b>£1,522.30</b>	<b>£1,321.40</b>	<b>£1,377.05</b>	<b>£1,835.73</b>	<b>£1,682.48</b>

By 12 August in last year's record-breaking season our museum income was **£1727**: this year it was **£1403** so it does not take even the least clever of accountants to see that things are not going to be so good in 2017 in spite of the fact that we have invested a lot in local advertising. People say 'It's the weather that has kept them away' but those who do venture through the doors of the museum are always very impressed by its quality!

## The Langton Poet

Over the years Langton has raised or educated many men and women of extraordinary talent in a wide variety of fields and continues so to do.

Many have come from the most humble of backgrounds, none more so than Geoff Hooper, now dead, who was born in the village at 4 Steppes on 15 November 1928 and lived in Langton for his entire life.

He was a quarryman in the days of muscle rather than machines, and rumoured to be the strongest man in Purbeck: older residents may remember this fine figure of a man, often bare to the waist, standing on the open back of Haysom's lorry as it drove him to work day in day out for many years.

He was a man of wide interests and knowledge who taught himself German to the point of becoming fluent in the language. More surprisingly, he was a well-read man of great sensitivity and became a poet whose work focussed primarily on his native parish of Langton Matravers but in time widened to include other parts of Purbeck and the world at large.

### The Motorist's Guide to Central Langton Matravers

Down at the foot of Chapel Hill  
The old grey Malthouse stands there still,  
And right next door along the way  
The old school yard where I used to play:  
Then Durnford, changed a lot since when  
It educated famous men.  
The churchyard headstones lean awry:  
The tower four square against the sky  
Has seen the centuries go by,  
And quaint old houses, mostly small,  
Look out towards the Rectory wall.  
The old King's Arms could tell some tales  
But just sells spirits, wine, and ales.  
Turn left and you are in Crack Lane,  
Surrounded by green fields again.  
Now that was Langton! Did you see?  
And, by the way, you drove past me.

This example of Geoff's work was taken more or less at random from the forty poems published by the Society in a well-illustrated anthology of The Langton Poems of Geoff Hooper. The poems are testimony to his love of nature and music, his hard work in the quarries, and his wry sense of humour...characteristics which shine though on every page.

The anthology may be bought at the museum for only £2.00 which is a ridiculously low price for something that will give much simple pleasure to people who love Langton: alternatively, please send a cheque to David Selman who on receipt of an amount sufficient to cover postage will send you a copy by post!

## Any other business?

No, not on this occasion, other than to thank all those who are in any way associated with the running of the LMLHPS and its museum, particularly the committee and the voluntary custodians.

To paraphrase someone else, but I forget who: never has a Society owed so much to so few.

We have a real concern that the future of LMLHPS will be in jeopardy unless more people come forward to give a hand in its running...and what we really need are some younger people. Most of those who are currently involved in its affairs are themselves historical figures who care deeply about the village but the 'P' in LMLHPS is for 'preservation' and self-preservation is something that we are worried about given that the average age of the committee is substantially above seventy!!!

**August 2017**