



LANGTON MATRAVERS LOCAL HISTORY AND
PRESERVATION SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2017

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY...AND IF IT'S NOT TOO LATE [IT ISN'T!] LET'S MAKE A COLLECTIVE DECISION THAT 2017 WILL BE THE MUSEUM'S BEST YEAR EVER! PLEASE DO YOUR UTMOST TO MAKE SURE THAT OUR NEW YEAR RESOLUTION IS NOT ONE THAT IS BROKEN BY THE END OF JANUARY!

A KIND OF PARTY GAME TO GET THINGS GOING

If the words **NEW YEAR RESOLUTION** in the greeting above are coloured **blue and underlined** it means that you are 'one of the twenty-one' [see later], and I regret to inform you that your subscription payable on 1 September 2016 is still outstanding. I very much hope that you will wish to rectify this oversight more or less by return of post!

MEMBERSHIP

In the last year ended 31 August 2016 total subscription income from subscriptions and donations was £1715.

Already this year, in the period 1 September 2016 to 31 December 2016, the amount has reached **£3027** with 21 renewals still awaited. Of this amount, £549.50 was donations over and above the subscription of £5.00 [single] or £7.50 [family].

It is very pleasing also that **twenty** members have already paid a minimum of £100 to be **Members for Life**, one of whom gave £150 and another £200! This explains why subscription income for the current year is so much more than in 2015-2016!

This means that we have had a fantastic response to our mailing in September but sadly, having been reminded with a written cut-off deadline on two occasions, fifteen former members failed to respond and have been removed from the list. They will receive no further communications from the Society...including this Newsletter. We will not be sending in the bailiffs!

A VERY NICE LETTER TO RECEIVE

The following letter was received in September 2016 alongside a **membership for life** subscription of £100 with an additional donation of £100 making a total of £200.

Dear David

Just a brief note to say how much I enjoyed being a Custodian at the LMLHPS Museum for fourteen years.

When 'My husband and I' came to live in Langton thirty years ago, within six months Reg Saville and Sybil Shephard arrived on the doorstep to ask us if we would like to help in the Museum.

They very soon convinced me I would meet many interesting people and also learn a lot.

Both so very true.

Wishing the Museum many more years to come...

Name withheld...but the writer is a lovely lady with a great smile and a real sense of humour! I'm almost tempted to reveal her identity but let it remain a secret between her and me!

THE MUSEUM IN 2016

The Museum was open from 1 April 2016 until the end of September and enjoyed a relatively successful season because, perhaps, of the new policy of free admission supplemented by arm twisting!

Income from donations and sales **was £2420, an increase of 27% on last year**, and this can be compared below with the season totals in the previous six years.

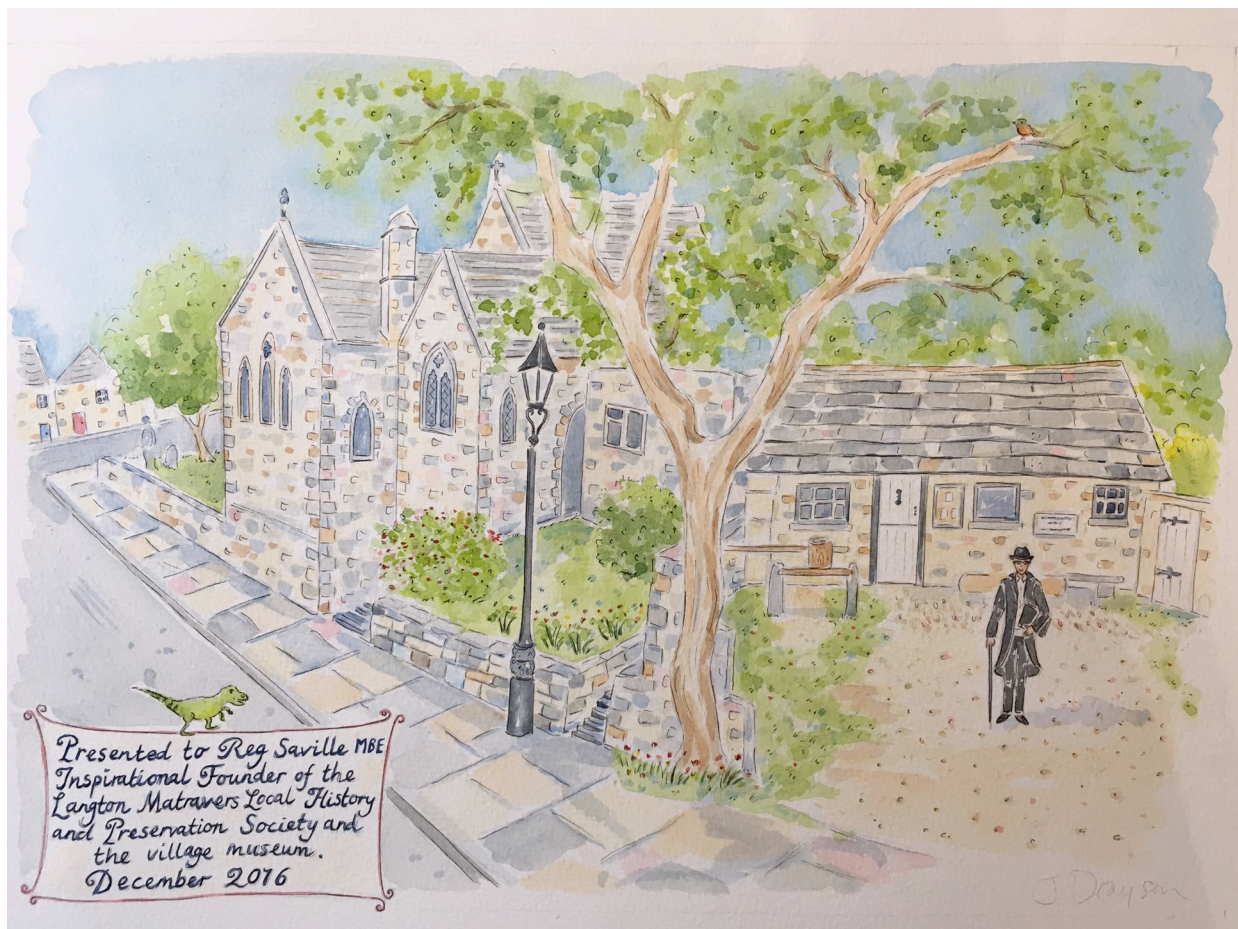
2015	£1765
2014	£1522
2013	£1321
2012	£1377
2011	£1835
2010	£1682

Our biggest problem remains the need to entice people [including local residents] to walk the thirty or so metres from the High Street to our gem of a museum in St George's Close behind the Church. Of course we could throw money at various means of publicity but even with substantially increased revenue in 2016 we still barely break even, our greatest expenditure being electricity and insurance!

Most people know that Reg Saville has resigned from being Curator because he is rather more old now than he was when he was born in 1922, but the greatest testimony that we could give him by way of recognition for all his hard work on behalf of the village over many years is for 'his baby' to go from strength to strength.

Let's give it a go...and make a start by ensuring that on 1 April 2017 the Museum opens with more custodians than it needs so that we can truly say 'We never close!'.

AN EVENING WITH RJS



The Langton Matravers Local History and Preservation Society honoured Reg Saville MBE with the presentation of a specially commissioned painting at the meeting held on 21 December 2016. The painting, created by local artist, Janine Drayson, the daughter of one of our members, depicted in her typically quirky style a caricature of Reg standing outside the Museum which he, with Jim Bradford, set up nearly fifty years ago. Before the presentation a sizeable audience of some sixty members and friends had been entertained by 'An Evening with RJS' when Reg spoke about the Bartlett Family of Langton Matravers who were his maternal grandparents and responsible for much of the development of 'old' Langton! There followed mulled wine and the reading of some of the dialect poems of William Barnes. Unfortunately Reg's brother David was unable to make the journey from

Weymouth this year and he was greatly missed, particularly because an interloper read two poems by Thomas Hardy in order to give Reg time to draw breath.

HE MAY NEVER SPEAK TO ME AGAIN



The Sage of Langton Matravers

There is probably nobody alive who knows more about Langton Matravers than Reg Saville. He was born there, grew up there, and has spent the last fifty years there. His only period of absence was for his army service in World War 2 and for his first teaching post in Harrow. Since his return, he has given countless lectures on local history, taken hundreds of people around places of interest in Dorset (Purbeck in particular), and has become revered as the founder of the Langton Matravers Local History and Preservation Society and as the driving force behind the creation of the Langton Matravers Museum. For all this and his many other services to the local community, he was awarded the MBE in 2004.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This extract is the opening of a much longer and very interesting article by Tony Burton-Page published with the photo of RJS 'at home' in the Dorset Life Magazine [December 2016] copies of which remain on sale from the publisher [01929 551264] for those members who would like to learn more about 'this Dorset life'.

Yes, Reg Saville shuns publicity but the timing of the Dorset Life article provided too good an opportunity to miss when this Newsletter was prepared and, after all, the photo is a pretty good one though Reg will disagree! Those members who live away from Langton Matravers and do not therefore see Reg out and about in the village will be delighted to see this visual confirmation that all is well after his serious fall in the early part of last year!

PEOPLE SOMETIMES ASK...

...how many members does the Society have? So if you are interested in such things here is the answer!

On 31 December 2016 there were 120 memberships on the books and these comprised

36 family memberships
23 single memberships
20 Members for Life
21 subscriptions owing

SHAME ON YOU IF YOU CHECKED THE ADDITION!

Of these 120 there were 82 with a BH19 postcode which suggests that those members live within a relatively short distance of Langton Matravers. The rest, who still have an obvious interest in the village, are spread far and wide though none is from foreign parts [unless we count Wales!!!].

PURBECK STONE IN HIGH PLACES! OR AT GROUND LEVEL!

It is well known to all of us who live in the village that our local quarries have for many years produced stone of such high quality suited to many purposes that it is used throughout the United Kingdom and even sometimes overseas.

We who live here tend to see the stone in its most simple forms as dry-stone walls, paving, and for building houses and barns...and because we are so used to it we rarely give it a second glance.

But if you visit The Purbeck Stone Museum which forms part of the village museum you will see that 'our' stone is used in many varied creative ways by artists and sculptors who demonstrate breathtaking skill when working with a raw material that takes no prisoners.

Some of these found international fame, such as Mary Spencer Watson who lived locally in Dunshay Manor and whose carving of a quarryman stands in the corner of St George's Church; others are very well known in their professional field, one at least of whom is a member of the LMLHPS and could probably name the hole in the ground from which any piece of Purbeck stone is found; and some can best be described as local people who have discovered that through hard work and perseverance they have developed a talent that is the envy of many!

The most recent piece of publically recognised Purbeck Stone [which the experts in the Society will more properly describe as Purbeck Thornback] was created by Martin Jennings and dedicated in a ceremony held in early December 2016 in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.



RECENT AND FORTHCOMING MEETINGS OF THE SOCIETY

So far this season we have enjoyed lectures by Reg Saville, Joyce Meates, and John Patrick and now we look forward to the following:

Thursday 19 January

David Corben
Tales of Swanage Lifeboat

The Corben Family has a long association with the local RNLI

Thursday 23 February

Phil Judkins
How Langton Won the War

Dr Judkins lives in Yorkshire and is Chairman of The Purbeck Radar Museum Trust. His talk will be a non-technical account of the importance of Langton and Worth to the development of radar during the Second World War

Thursday 23 March

David Haysom [A change of Speaker and Subject]
An Illustrated History of the Extremes of Swanage Weather

David Haysom is a very prominent member of Swanage Museum

Thursday 27 April

Annual General Meeting

PLEASE THINK ABOUT THIS!

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PLEASE THINK ABOUT THIS!

Thursday 16 March [11am]

Meeting of Museum Custodians for 2017 season



It would be really wonderful if at the meeting on 16 March we are inundated with volunteers to become custodians for two hours a week!

Lord Kitchener's famous pointing finger did the trick one hundred years ago so use your imagination, please, to see Jasmine Cattle's face in the picture for it is she who will be hoping to fill every gap in 2017! Her message is similar in essence to his!

Please call Jasmine on 01919 421372 if you can help!

FUTURE NEWSLETTERS

The next Newsletter will be published in September 2017...can you wait that long?

It would be really pleasing if it becomes less of a one-man-band so if you would like to contribute a brief article on anything relevant to LMLHPS please call 01929 421 481 or email selman@globalnet.co.uk. Don't be shy! Do it!