

Sabine Baring-Gould Appreciation Society

Newsletter 1993-94

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SBGAS Newsletter, No 13.

Quinquennial Report. (Editorial)

It is uncertain what SBG would have made of such a bureaucratic requirement with regard to vicarages, introduced the year before he died - a measure intended for the benefit of the occupants, it must be said. However, as we enter the Society's 5th year, it may be time to do our own `quinquennial'. What is the state of SBGAS? Are we achieving the aims, as set out inside the front cover of the newsletter? Well, we haven't yet published a `periodical journal'- and I'm not quite sure myself what that would be! In the light of experience so far I would feel that our first objective in terms of special publications should be the Bibliography. The first step towards that would be to achieve completion of the outline work that Roger Bristow has been so competently putting together these past two years. That might take another couple of years. Then perhaps we could set our sights on a fullscale, detailed, printed and illustrated Bibliography- a much longer-term and more ambitious project. Alongside that I hope we would be able gradually to reprint the scarcer pamphlets.

The first part of the aim is, I believe, being met, and although our membership is modest in number, it is growing, and stands well poised for further increase. We have not yet managed annual gatherings in all the regions - that remains a challenge, but one that will be well worth the effort of meeting. Clearly the nature of the man himself will mean that there will always be a strong Westcountry and bibliophile emphasis, but it will be really enriching to have a fuller involvement of the North, South and East, as well as the contributions of members or potential members with artistic, archaeological or antiquarian interests, or maybe linguistic, liturgical or literary ones!

Looking back to the first issue, I see that the editorial concluded with the following sentence: "It would be good to hear from members how interest (in SBG) was kindled for them, and how their collections of his work have developed". That invitation still stands, and each reader must surely have a story to tell. I don't think any contribution has been rejected yet, and only once or twice has an item been deferred for lack of space.

David Shacklock

Rev. S. Baring-Gould Dead **Married Mill-Girl and Wrote 100 Books, Author of 'Now the Day Is Over**

The Rev. S. Baring Gould died yesterday at Lew Trenchard, North Devon, at the age of 90. He was famous as the author of over a hundred books - many of them novels - and a few of the best known hymns in the English language.

On his father's death he inherited the family estates of Lew Trenchard, and presented himself to the rectory of Lew Trenchard on his uncle's death in 1881.

In addition to writing the hymns: "Onward Christian Soldiers", "Now the Day is Over", "Through the Night of Doubt & Sorrow", he was the author of books dealing with:

Religion, Travel, Natural history, Mythology, Saints & Martyrs, Education, Iceland, Germany, France, Wales, Brittany, Rhine, Pyrenees, West Country, Family names, Churches, Ghosts, Biography, Many novels.

His first book was published in 1854, and after that date there was an increasing flow of works. He was an acknowledged authority on Church and theological questions in the West of England, and he knew every old church in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall. He did much to familiarise the public with the West Country.

Mr. Baring-Gould was a great traveller, and he wrote voluminously on the places he visited.

AN EARLY ROMANCE

Romance entered early into his life. When a curate in Horbury, Yorkshire, he fell in love with Miss Grace Taylor, a mill girl. He sent her to be educated at York, bearing all the expense himself. They were afterwards married, and their long life was one of great happiness.

Mrs. Gould died in 1916, and on her tombstone in Latin are the words: "Half my soul". There are 12 children living.

The story of how he came to write the hymns is little known. In 1864, when he was a curate in the West Riding of Yorkshire, he started a night school for the miners and workers at Horbury Bridge. Afterwards he built a mission chapel, where the evening song "Now the Day is Over" was first sung. The scholars found it a weary climb up the hill. Mr. Baring-Gould sat down and wrote a hymn to enhearten them, never imagining that it would win such world-wide

popularity. He set the words to a tune of Haydn's, and with the same object he wrote "Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow."

"ZAVED BY A ZOW"

He was once asked by a woman whom he took into dinner whether he was "the author of those delightful lives of the Saints or of those atrocious novels." He had to confess he wrote both.

Mr. Baring-Gould had a keen sense of humour. When an old woman implored him to say a few words over her "zow" which had been taken ill he spoke in a sepulchral voice: "O pig, if thou livest, thou livest; but if thou diest, thou diest." The sow got better.

Later on Mr. Baring-Gould himself lay sick, and the old woman came to him and repeating the formula substituted "parson" for "pig." He was seized with a fit of laughter, which broke the quinsy he was suffering from, and he used to say he was "zaved by a zow."

WRONGLY REPORTED DEAD

In 1906 he was wrongly reported dead, and like a few other distinguished men, he read in the newspapers what people had to say about him.

The Rev. Baring-Gould's illness had extended over some weeks, and his condition gradually became weaker until he was practically in extremis on Tuesday, and died peacefully early yesterday morning.

This is the second article from The Daily News - dated 2 Jan. 1924 - see Newsletter No. 12, Editorial.

Further Printed References

Arthur Mee's CHILDREN'S ENCYCLOPAEDIA contains a paragraph on the hymns 'Onward Christian Soldiers' and 'Now the Day is Over' (p.1760 & see p.4189; also p.7064, 7132 & 7412:errata). D.L. Edwards - CHRISTIAN ENGLAND vol.3 - 2 sentences p.204. DARTMOOR SEASONS (Devon Books) quotes 'A Book of Dartmoor' p.iv.

DEVON - W.G. Hoskins - David & Charles new ed./2nd imp. 1978 (originally published 1954) quotes SBG under 'Clovelly' (p.370); 'Stowford' (p.483); and 'Werrington' (p.514). It also has a piece on 'Lew Trenchard' & SBG (p.423).

S.H. Burton in DEVON VILLAGES (Hale) refers to 'John Herring' on p.119, and has 9 sentences on SBG (p.141f).

The Methuen Little Guide on ESSEX (5th ed./rev. 1930 - first published 1909) mentions 'Mehalah' and the Rose Inn on p.226.

Leslie V. Grinsell - FOLKLORE OF PREHISTORIC SITES IN BRITAIN - David & Charles 1976: regards the tradition of the prophet and the cup of gold as 'unsupported' (p.32); discusses the Iron Age cemetery at Harlyn Bay - see 'A Book of Folklore' 1913, p.227f - (p.88); mentions the Rillaton round-barrow at Linkinhorne and the legend of the prophet again - see 'A Book of Cornwall' 1899, p. 107f - (p.91); and the Wolstonbury hill-fort at Pyecombe and the Ascension day procession of the Hurstpierpoint choirboys - see 'Early Reminiscences' 1923 p.275 - (p.127).

Eric Hemery - HISTORIC DART - David & Charles 1982 - quotes 'Further Reminiscences' on the Goulds of Pridhamsleigh (p.78f); mentions the Goulds of Staverton and the removal of the ledgerstones and brasses to Lew in 1877 (p.105); see notes 3 & 4 (p.109) on the chandeliers bought in Malines for Staverton & Lew, and an amplification of the ledger-

stones affair; the trial of Capt. Edward Gould quoted from `Devonshire Characters' (p.254 appx.E); 3 titles in bibliography (p.254).

THE LADY 20 Dec. 1988-2 Jan. 1989 contains an article by Greta Cernsale (p. 11320).

Several more Ward Lock Red Guides are found to contain references: LOOE & SOUTH CORNWALL (14th ed) `Cornish Characters' (p.28)

PLYMOUTH (9th ed.rev) `Court Royal' (p.25); `Eve', `Guavas the Tinner' & `Dartmoor Idylls' (p.26) SALCOMBE (4th ed) `Court Royal' & `Kitty Alone' (p.16); `A Book of the West - Devon' (p. 18).

NINETEENTH CENTURY ICELAND by Frank Ponzi - Artists & Odysseys 1986 contains two beautiful colour lithographs & a page of script (p.17,23,96).

Alan Boucher's THE ICELAND TRAVELLER: A Hundred Years of Adventure contains references to SBG throughout.

NOTES & QUERIES 9th series vo1.II July-Dec.1898 reviews `Lives of the Saints' vols. XV & XVI (p.59,159):

THE OXFORD SONG BOOK (Jenny C. Buck) OUP 1916 contains `Flowers in the Valley' from `Garland of Country Song' (no.45 p.74). The Revd. A.A.Clinnick - THE STORY OF THE THREE CHURCHES OF ST. PIRAN 1936 (pamphlet) - paragraph on p.5 mentions SBG in relation to the legend of St. Piran.

THE SMITHSONIAN for July 1993 contains a splendid article by David Roberts (p.74-83) with excellent colour photographs, including some by our President.

STAVERTON 1993 by Jean Feloy - a large format illustrated brochure containing one reference on p.27.

Anne Born - SOUTH DEVON: Combe, Tor & Seascape - Gollancz 1983 quotes from `Devon' on Buckfastleigh and Richard Cabell (p.79) & see bibliography p.186.

Owen Chadwick - THE VICTORIAN CHURCH part 11 1860-1901 - re `Lives of the Saints' (p.109); `Onward Christian Soldiers' (p.290f); `Through the Night...' (p.467).

VOICES 1870-1914 - Peter Vansittart - Cape 1984: 2 lines under 'list of contributors' (Gould) (p.273); quotes p. 126-9 of `Curious Myths': `A Satire on German Mythologies' (p.293); index/Gould.

Gatherings - Summer 1993

Rozel Lawlor

There were two occasions this summer where there were gatherings of the Baring-Gould family and members of the Sabine Baring-Gould Appreciation Society.

The first was on 25th June at St. Paul de Leon Church, Staverton, on the River Dart. Staverton staged a flower festival to raise funds for the restoration of their magnificent mediaeval wooden screen which is plagued by the inevitable beetle. This beautiful church in its valley setting was the Gould family's parish church when they lived at Pridhamsleigh and Sabine cherished this link. Surely the screen here must have inspired Sabine to restore the screen at St. Peter, Lew Trenchard. In fact, Mrs. Gould made a gift of money towards this project - the only contribution made by an 'outsider', all other funds needed being raised spontaneously by Sabine's parishioners.

The Festival organisers were kind enough to invite us to their celebration, despite the fact that Sabine in his time had caused the incumbent and parish much distress by removing the Gould family gravestones when renovations threatened their displacement. Despite this deed, the organisers treated us family members and members of the Society with great warmth. It was a perfect summer's day and the church was full of exquisite flower displays, their heady perfume, and indeed, life.

The second occasion was the combined Annual General Meeting of the Society and get-together of the members of the family in the presence of Merriol Almond, chairman of the Society and head of the family. She was staying at Lew Trenchard with Christopher and Betsy, her son and daughter. This was a pleasantly informal gathering, giving us all a chance to examine those books of Sabine which had been collected for sale, including some recently published in paperback.

For me, there was something very special in hearing from Flora Brown how Leila her grandmother (and Sabine's half-sister) had loved the company of my beloved, gentle, grandmother Barbara.

We all walked up the valley of the West Dart to Wistman's Wood, with its sculptural granite, moss-covered boulders and stunted oaks festooned with lichen and ferns.

On the opposite side of the valley runs the Devonport Leat, which was cut at the end of the 18th century to supply Devonport and its growing dockyard.

We returned to eat our picnic lunches together on the banks of the river - sadly, I had to leave the party which was to progress to Lew Trenchard and cream teas in the Dower House.

This was another memorable day, organised by Image Briggs, Sabine's redoubtable granddaughter and family historian.

The World Of SBG (2) SBG's West Country

Although SBG spent much of his childhood touring Europe - and many of his adult winters and other holidays too - and although he lived his early adulthood largely in the south, north and east of the country, he was overall a Westcountryman.

He was born and baptised in Exeter (1834), lived for a while in Bratton Clovelly, took student vacations in Tavistock (1851-5), and of course came home to roost and finally die at Lew Trenchard (1881-1924). It was his world by ancestry and adoption.

In view of his strong sense of vocation to the work of restoration of his ancestral family home and parish church, it is perhaps surprising that, even after 1881, he still travelled so extensively and wrote so much about other parts, both descriptive and imaginary. But it was the two most southwesterly counties that really claimed his attention, Devon in particular, and of that, Dartmoor was his first love.

Whatever his critics may say, the range of his activities and the energy with which he pursued them were prodigious - exploration, excavation, research, conservation, observation, publication - anything of interest to him he made interesting to others. Nor was his work that of an academic recluse. Magistrates, musicians and university dons were among his many accomplices and fellow antiquarian adventurers. From the first taste for westcountry antiquities taken through the gift of Rowe's Perambulations of Dartmoor by an uncle when Sabine was 14, to the last articles he wrote for Devon and Cornwall Notes & Queries there is a span of over 70 years - what a fruitful span that was. This centre-spread can only give the barest outline, and indicate a few of the connecting links.

On the Resurrection Morning

On the Resurrection Morning
Soul & Body meet again,
No more sorrow, no more weeping,
No more pain.
Here awhile they must be parted
And the Flesh its Sabbath keep,
Waiting, in a holy stillness
Fast-asleep.

x x x

O the beauty! O the gladness
Of that Resurrection Day,
Which shall never, thro' long ages
Pass away.
On that happy Easter morning
All the graves their dead restore,
Father, sister, child & Mother
Meet once more

S. Baring Gould

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Soul & Body meet again,
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(later versions conclude verse 1 'wrapt in sleep'; verse 2 line 3 'which shall not, through endless ages') - see p.16 Membership Notes, final paragraph.

Adele Reboul

Adele Baring-Gould Reboul of Nissequogue, St. James, New York, U.S.A. died at her home on July 22nd. She was 88.

She was born in Wimbledon on June 11th, 1905 and grew up at Lew Trenchard. She was the daughter of Edward Baring-Gould and Marion Baring-Gould (nee Linton). Her grandfather, the Reverend Sabine Baring-Gould, wrote the hymns, 'Onward Christian Soldiers', 'Now The Day is Over' and others; he was the author of novels and works of non-fiction and collected folk songs and folk lore.

In the early 1930s Adele emigrated to America where she studied microbiology and cytology and became a technician for Dr. George Papanicolaou at New York Hospital. Dr. Papanicolaou's work resulted in a test for cervical cancer which has saved many women's lives.

In 1937 Adele married Jean B. Reboul and they have two sons, John and Edward. Adele and her husband were accomplished gardeners specializing in rhododendrons. Adele developed, showed and patented several new varieties, naming two after her husband and her granddaughter Kathryn. Adele was an active supporter of the Smithtown, Long Island YMCA, serving on its Board for many years.

She is survived by her sons John W. and Edward L. and her grandchildren Kathryn Adele, John Mathieu, Alexandra and Pierre Reboul. Services were held on July 26th, 1993. Memorial contributions can be made to Lew Trenchard Church PCC, Lewdown, Devon.

SBGAS Newsletter, No 14.

The Year of 1894 (Editorial)

Tantalisingly, this is the last year recorded in SBG's *Reminiscences*, since the intended 3rd volume was never published and the manuscript never found. Even more tantalisingly, his final chapter entitled, "Squab-pie 1894", contains only one paragraph relevant to the year itself, in which he summarises his joint excavation ventures with Robert Burnard, which began with Broadom and Grimspound in that year. It is this work which is being celebrated by the Dartmoor Exploration Society in this centenary year, and about which Jane Marchand has written her dissertation. We congratulate Jane on her award of a "First" from Exeter University, and are delighted to reproduce part of it in these pages.

For SBG 1894 was a prolific year with the pen. On the fiction front, *Kitty Alone - a Story of Three Fires*, illustrated by Gordon Browne, and situated on Dartmoor at Combe Cellars, made its first appearance in *Good Words*, published by Isbister; and *The Queen of Love* was published in 3 volumes by Methuen - though this may well also have been serialised previously in another publication. His two other major works were: *A Book of Fairy Tales*, retold (Methuen), with 20 illustrations - 5 full page - by A.J. Gaskin, and based largely on the 1697 collection by Charles Perrault. SBG's collection contains 21 stories with a 3-page preface and 7 1/2 pages of notes. (He also wrote an introduction to an edition of *Grimm's Fairy Tales*); secondly, *The Deserts of Southern France*: an introduction to the limestone and chalk plateaux of ancient Aquitaine, illustrated by S. Hutton & F.D. Bedford in 2 volumes. Essays and articles included 'Colour in Composition', 3 articles in the *Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, 2 in the *Sunday Magazine*, one in *Atalanta*, one in *Chambers'*, two in *Cassell's* and one in *Good Words*. (Note: *Perpetua* should be dated 1897 not 1894 - my mistake).

David Shacklock

How An Interest In Topography Of The Fens Led To Sabine Baring-Gould

Raymond J. Scott

It was whilst dining with friends one evening during the Autumn of 1985 that I discovered Sabine Baring-Gould. My host, being aware of my book collection of the fens, mentioned that he had a book which he felt sure I would be interested to see. As the port was being passed he produced an 1896 edition of Cheap Jack Zita, in which old photographs of the fenland village of Prickwillow had been glued to some of the blank spaces. Inside the cover is written 'Rev. Claude D. Kingdon, 35 years Vicar of Prickwillow'. It goes on in the same hand, 'This novel was written in my study at Prickwillow'.

My host had become the owner of this book via a recent legacy of a house and its contents. The only knowledge he had of the book was that the deceased had been given it by the widow after attending a friend's funeral somewhere in Cornwall. He declared that he had not read the book and was not likely to, but I was very welcome to borrow the book to read. As it was of great local interest I could not put the book down once I had started to read it. Having read the book I could not settle until I had purchased it, which I subsequently did.

I always claim that it was probably the most expensive book I have ever bought, due to the fact that since that first SBG purchase my collection has now grown to 40 books.

Although my mind was now focused on the works of Sabine Baring-Gould I could not totally forget the Rev. Claude Drewitt Kingdon (1859-1949). Knowledge I gained locally told me that he left Prickwillow in 1917, was Curate in charge at St. Teath, Cornwall 1917-1923, was also Rural Dean of Statton, Cornwall and retired 1946. He died on 12th May 1949 and was buried in Whitstone churchyard with other members of his family, the majority of whom were also clergymen.

One very interesting point is that his paternal grandmother was Jane Hawker, sister of Rev. Robert Stephen Hawker, Vicar of Morwenstow.

Before my story ends I must also add that a further bequest from the same estate as my friend's legacy came, left instruction for two cottages to be sold and the proceeds given to Morwenstow Church.

Subsequently, whilst visiting SBG country, I have made extra effort and also visited both Whitstone and Morwenstow churches.

My friend has since moved into a new house which he has called 'Morwenstow Cottage'.

As you can see, there is a certain amount of Cornish mist and mystery that abounds in this part of the Isle of Ely.

I have spent many pleasurable hours searching for, and acquiring, my collection and I look forward to continuing my search and at the same time enjoying those already in my possession.

Sabine Baring-Gould, Archaeologist

By any standard Sabine Baring-Gould was a remarkable man of enormous energy and enthusiasm, with wide ranging interests. He was parson, poet, novelist, theologian, historian, antiquarian and archaeologist. He was also that forgotten and despised character - the enthusiastic amateur - to him the word amateur was a term of praise (Betjeman 1954:)

Born in Exeter in 1834 he was the eldest son of a cavalry lieutenant in the East India Company's Service. His father was invalided out of the Service and consequently lived an unsettled life abroad with his family before settling into the ancestral estate at Lew Trenchard, just off Dartmoor. It was here that Baring-Gould's great affection for Dartmoor began, and was to remain for the rest of his life - it was simply "the region I love best in the world" (Dickinson 1970:157). His interest in its antiquities was sparked off by the gift of Rowe's *Perambulation*.

His education had been fairly disrupted; after Cambridge he taught at Lancing and Hurstpierpoint schools before becoming ordained at the age of 30. He served as a curate in two Yorkshire parishes where he wrote the hymn, *Onward Christian Soldiers* and where his writing began in earnest. His chief work was *The Origin and Development of Religious Life* which attracted the attention and praise of W.E. Gladstone. Gladstone subsequently offered him the Crown living of Vast Mersea in Essex. He eventually acquired the incumbency at Lew Trenchard in 1881.

Baring-Gould's writing was by now covering all manner of subjects from *Werewolves and their Natural History* to *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*. In a review of the latter, the Athenaeum observed:

'The author is sometimes fanciful and overbold in his conclusions, but he conducts us through marvellous ways - and if we do not acquiesce in his descriptions or arguments, we seldom differ from him without hesitation. (West of England Magazine 1888:47).

The past had always been of profound interest to him. At the age of 15 whilst living near Pau in France he discovered and subsequently excavated a succession of pavements preserved amidst the outlines of a Roman villa. The English community were vastly excited by the discovery and the French correspondingly annoyed; owing to the petty jealousy of the French authorities the whole site was eventually allowed to disintegrate completely. Baring-Gould planned the whole villa, copying the mosaic floors in water colour. One lying north of the atrium was particularly beautiful with a bust of Neptune whose arms were filled with mackerel, oysters, lobsters and octopi. These drawings were bound in a book and taken by Baring-Gould's brother to show to a London linoleum firm and subsequently lost. (Baring-Gould 1923:174).

At the age of 18 he wrote an article on the remains of an ancient camp near Bayonne which local antiquaries had attributed to the Romans or Saracens. Baring-Gould disagreed - he thought from its position in the centre of the Basque region that it belonged to those people driven by the Romans into their mountain region (Baring-Gould 1851). These 'ancient camps' were to remain an interest for him all his life.

His interest in antiquity was further fuelled by a visit in 1857 with his uncle, General Sabine, the then President of the Royal Society, to a meeting of the Society where there

was an exhibition of the portable art discovered by Christy and Lartet on the Vezere in the Dordogne.

The whole science of early man was then in its infancy and the revelations of Lyell, Christy and Lartet startled the world, and made the believers in the textual infallibility of the Bible, of creation and of Adam and Eve, shake in their shoes. I resolved to visit the Vezere and see with mine own eyes whether these things were as stated. (Baring-Gould 1923:258).

This he did 35 years later, recording his visit in *The Deserts of Central France and Cliff Castles and Cave Dwellings*. His visit to the caves at Les Eyzies led him to write:

What a book of Chronicles the earth is! Beneath the soil is the record of Creation, written in indelible lines; the soil itself gives the history of man, to be read with pick and shovel (Baring-Gould 1925:255).

This reading of the history of man by pick and shovel was to occupy him fully on his return to Lew Trenchard to be squarson. Several distinguished archaeologists made Lew Trenchard their headquarters when visiting Devon (Dickinson 1970:168). The Rev.W. C. Lukis stayed with him whilst working on the prehistoric alignments on Dartmoor for the Society of Antiquaries. It is evident that Baring-Gould assisted in this work - in one of Burnard's map albums there is an ink-drawn survey carried out by Lukis and Baring-Gould in August 1880 of the stone row at Hingston Hill.

In 1892 he was invited by the squire of Trebartha Hall in Cornwall to carry out an excavation at Trewortha Marsh (Baring-Gould 1892). This was the first excavation carried out on a deserted medieval settlement and the dating of it caused him problems. The settlement is situated amongst prehistoric huts and field systems and his confusion is understandable. Two reports appeared in the JRIC with accompanying plates of drawings and plans, including one of the whole settlement. His plans and descriptions were described as

`a model for the time - though the interpretation was often odd, which is hardly surprising since he was a pioneer with little previous work upon which to base his conclusions' (Beresford 1971: 82).

Baring-Gould's conclusion was that the settlement postdated the Roman conquest but more exploration was needed to arrive at a more definite conclusion as to the date of these perplexing remains (Baring-Gould 1891).

Both he and Burnard played an active part in the updating of the OS maps for Dartmoor with reference to this appearing in Burnard's Albums. The OS surveyor involved was Edward Thomas.

Following Baring Gould's work at Trewortha, Thomas accompanied him there in November of 1891 to record the site. On their return journey the pair got completely lost in the dark which resulted in them being caught in a quaking bog at Red Mire Marsh. Baring-Gould commented:

I have ever entertained a repugnance to wobbly ground. I like to have firm soil under my feet, theologically, morally, socially and financially" (Baring-Gould 1925: 251).

Edward Thomas was to undergo a similar experience whilst mapping on Dartmoor with Baring-Gould and Burnard in 1892. He and Burnard became separated from the main party in the fog and spent 8 hours getting themselves off the moor. Baring-Gould recounted to the *Western Daily Mercury* of 26 June 1894:

how he and his companions wondered with interest, made somewhat languid by lunch and the fire at the Duchy Hotel in Princetown, what become of the "full of faith" photographer and his unfortunate companion, the surveyor with all his surveying implemements?

He was to write at length on the shortcomings of the OS mapping. He thought the original maps drawn by surveyors, like Thomas, showed a much better plan than that eventually published. This was due to the original drawings being gone over by the revisers who struck out much detail as unimportant as they were indifferent to matters of archaeological interest. (Baring-Gould 1899c:3).

In 1893 Baring-Gould assisted Burnard in his work at Broadun and Broadun Rings and then carried out his own rather rapid excavation at Tavy Cleave. Here he excavated 4 huts, discovering a dais, hearth and cooking hole (Baring-Gould 1894a).

Their work in retrospect

Burnard and Baring-Gould were to receive further acclaim for their contribution to British archaeology. In 1900 they were both elected Honorary Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. Others elected that year included Charles W. Dymond who had visited Grimspound and Romilly Allen who had described their work so enthusiastically.

Baring-Gould was awarded the Henwood Gold Medal by the Royal Institute of Cornwall in 1902 for his work on *The Celtic Saints* and *The Saints of Cornwall*. He was to follow these with his book on *The Lives of the British Saints* in collaboration with the Rev. Canon J. Fisher of the Cambrian Society.

"It needs no great discrimination to see that if the Devonian provided the speculative views it was the Welshman who supplied the facts" (Nash Williams 1946:20)

Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that Baring-Gould was held in high esteem by the Cambrian Society - all his work in Wales being at their express invitation. At Tre're Ceiri he was requested to "make some excavation in order to ascertain its date" with the Society contributing £15 towards the expenses (Baring-Gould 1904:1). On his copy of this report is added in his own hand that Prof. Boyd Dawkins and Harold Hughes resumed work at Tre'r Ceiri in 1906 when their findings confirmed conclusions he had already arrived at. Mortimer Wheeler was to describe Baring-Gould as one of the few successors to the sturdy pioneers of Welsh archaeology (Wheeler 1925:6). However, he then goes on to praise the work of Burnard and Baring-Gould - describing the latter as

"one of the most fertile and picturesque antiquaries in the realm; he had never known a man so versatile and who had done so much work which had been so excellent."

In a letter written to the WMN of 21 April 1920 after Burnard's death, Baring-Gould wrote

"All my college friends have passed beyond the veil, and of the friends I made in middle life none were more precious to me than Mr. Burnard ... He did during many years a notable work in establishing the period of the rude stone monuments on Dartmoor. A work

that can never be forgotten in establishing the epoch and as such his name must never be forgotten."

In a letter sent to Baring-Gould on behalf of the Devonshire Association on his 89th birthday - Worth wrote:

"We may not claim that the advancement of science, literature and art is an object wide enough to include the whole scope of your work." (Worth 1924:13).

Jane Marchand

More Printed References

BRITISH MINSTRELSIE I - The Art of Song-Singing by James Sneddon - Caxton - SBG quoted p.ix.

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SBGAS Newsletter, No 14.

Editorial

The South West continues to be the focus for SBG activity and interest: the *Winefred* reprint launch at Seaton is reported on by Becky Smith in this issue, and there is an SBG musical drama at Kingsbridge taking place while these pages are 'at press'. But with our Society's major event of the year occurring at Horbury, we look forward to an enlarged concept of Baring-Gould territory. News comes of research being done into Grace's family, and we hope to publish the fruit of that when it has been completed.

This issue contains the longer of the two newspaper articles on SBG's ministry and authorship at East Mersea, referred to in the piece, 'Spills and Thrills of Bookhunting'.

On page 8 there is a 'teaser' - a member has sent in a copy of the title page of Dartmoor Idylls to which has been pasted a newscutting. It is pretty clear that the reporter concerned was not in court - and made no attempt to check his facts. Edward Sabine was SBG's third child (his cousin of the same name had died two years earlier). But was SBG travelling with him at the time, perhaps regaling some story and distracting the driver? Does anyone know more about the incident here reported? Hatch can be found on the road map just east of Basingstoke on the A30. At that stage of his life Edward was running a successful business and living in London (Dickinson p.87).

David Shacklock

The Reluctant Rector & His Mersea Masterpiece

Robert Waterhouse offers a new assessment of Baring-Gould's "Mehalah," the Mersea melodrama that has been compared with "Wuthering Heights," based on a recently published biography of the remarkable author.

For 90 years the Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould lived a full, varied and mainly happy life. There was just one portion of it, the decade of the eighteen-seventies, on which in old age he looked back without pleasure: that was the time that he spent as Rector of East Mersea. "The Essex peasants," he declared austerely in his "Further Reminiscences" were dull, shy, reserved and suspicious. I never managed to understand them, nor they to understand me." Perhaps neither side tried very hard. The company was not up to scratch. "As far as I could see there were not many persons of value, as readers and thinkers, with whom to make friends ... The most intelligent of the farmers was Cant, a strong dissenter."

But it may not have been quite as bad as that at the time. One of the few authentic memories of him that I have traced comes from the grandson of the redoubtable Mrs. Jane Pullen of the Peldon "Rose" - a character in her own right - who was wont to relate that she well remembered Baring-Gould striding about the roads singing hymns loudly and cheerfully to himself. Probably his own hymns.

But glad or glum, the environment and the inhabitants combined to drive him in two directions: abroad in the first place - he travelled much in this decade, and one wonders

what was happening to the parish - and into himself in the second. And out of himself there emerged as a legacy of the hated isle - a masterpiece.

Ranks with "Wuthering Heights"

People who come to live on Mersea are told sooner or later that they must read "Mehalah" - the advice being almost invariably coupled with a deprecating grin and the remark "It's awful nonsense, of course." The deprecation is unnecessary.

My first acquaintance with it drove me at once to re-read Emily Bronte's "Wuthering Heights": I did not then know that the comparison had been made many years before - and not in Baring-Gould's disfavour - by Swinburne. Now a latterday writer has made it again, with more thought and care. "Onward Christian Soldier" by W.E. Purcell (Longman's, 21s.) is a full-dress study of a man rare enough almost for that overworked word "unique," a study written with a happy blend of perception, sympathy and irony.

As an author, Baring-Gould reminds one of that freakish genius Ford Madox Ford. Both were great story-tellers, and they shared in varying degree what perhaps may be described as a reluctance to allow the bare facts of a situation to confine the adornment which they placed upon it.

The degree did vary. Baring-Gould had a strong Christian conscience, and in general his elaborations did not extend beyond some curious episodes in his massive "Lives of the Saints." Ford had no conscience whatever, and moreover little regard for the laws of libel and slander.

On the other hand, while Baring-Gould had a somewhat acid perception of the ridiculous, Ford was endowed with a sense of pure comedy. Give him the conjunction of two disparate literary lions such as Henry James and Rudyard Kipling, and he could be richly funny: the fact that nobody believed a word of it could not spoil the story. It was Baring-Gould's strength (and danger) that he was in fact generally believed.

How did he get away with it, wonders Mr. Purcell, of an elaborate literary hoax carried out by Baring-Gould while still an undergraduate at Cambridge, and concludes "Readability combined with plausibility is the answer."

Taken for gospel

Plausibility. Most people on Mersea and many beyond know the story of the twin brothers of Barrow Hill, the tumulus half a mile beyond the Strood on the East Mersea road.

Among the party of Danes who martyred St. Osyth were these brothers, who captured her sister and brought her to Mersea. Here the division of the spoil presented difficulties, which the twins attempted to solve by hacking each other to pieces. On the hillock above the Strood their comrades buried them, together with the ship and the live girl for good measure. But as the moon waxes so does the flesh and sinew grow again and "if you listen at full moon you can hear the brothers fighting below in the heart of the barrow."

So Baring-Gould related in "Mehalah," and was generally credited with having unearthed the tale from some ancient source. He had done better than that: he had made it up on the spur of the moment. Of course it is good orthodox saga-ish stuff, and has many parallels,

but to impose on a community a whimsy of your own which in two generations is accepted as genuine folk-lore is a bit of an achievement.

Frantic outbursts

So indeed is "Mehalah" in its entirety. How does it compare with "Wuthering Heights" - for compared they must be? In both the central theme is the overwhelming power of a love which the possessed man considers will transcend death: or, to take another view of it, of a violent and unbridled passion. Here are two parallel passages:

"May she wake in torment!" he cried with frightful vehemence. ... "You say I killed you - haunt me, then! Be with me always - take any form - drive me mad! Only do not leave me in this abyss where I cannot find you! Oh, God, it is unutterable! I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!"

"We cannot live a moment the one without the other. If I were to die you would die too; you would rage and writhe against death but it would come. Death can no more part us than life. We will live together and we will die together, and moulder away in one another's arms. The worm that gnaws me shall gnaw you."

These two frantic outbursts issue, the first from a remote Yorkshire vicarage, the second from a remote Essex rectory. Admittedly these are "strong" passages, but the tone of both books throughout is much in tune with them.

In spite of certain archaisms it is also surprisingly modern; modern in the sense that ruthless egotism - "Bless you, Jack, I'll have what I want when I want it" - is accepted as a natural way

of life and as a matter of course. Nowhere in either of these violent works is there a trace of the Christian ethic, or any place for compassion or humility.

How much is owed?

It is difficult to judge what, or how much, Baring-Gould owes to Emily Bronte. "Wuthering Heights" was published at the end of

1848, "Mehalah" in 1880 - a time-lag, admitted, but the publishing world then did not move so fast and furiously as to-day.

There are parallels in the stories of which space does not permit quotation; for example the old family retainers, Joseph and Abraham, each a prime specimen of, respectively, Yorkshire and Essex cussedness. But whereas Joseph is the stock figure of a rustic brute, Abraham is a real character, observed with care and irony, and with the germs of a dour virtue in him.

Perhaps one may extend that instance to a generalisation. "Wuthering Heights" has its splendours, but the artificial contrivance and the appallingly stilted dialogue make it heavy going to-day. It gave our literary fathers a kick to know that all this Sturm und Drang had been cooked up by a consumptive spinster in a moorland vicarage (with the churchyard draining into it), but the incongruity has lost its novelty.

"Mehalah," on the other hand, though its story is equally if not more ridiculous, is embellished by so much acute observation of the Essex scene, by such pungent character drawing - the alcoholic Mrs. De Witt is a joy for ever - and by a pleasing irony (which occasionally becomes ferocious) that one is swept almost effortlessly over the larger absurdities.

Unhappily, it must be said that this remarkable work is generally available to-day only in a sadly truncated condition. The original has long been out of print, and when (one assumes) the copyright expired in 1950 some enterprising gentleman produced an "abridged" edition. This, while painstakingly preserving the actual sequence of events in every silly particular, has been remorselessly lopped of many of the grace-notes, of the diverting, profound or sour comments on men and matters which give the original its richness.

Prodigious output

Poor Emily produced her masterpiece and died. Baring-Gould threw off "Mehalah" in his stride as just one item in what was for a (nominally) working parish priest a prodigious literary output.

In an idle moment in the British Museum Reading Room recently I counted up the entries under Baring-Gould's name in the catalogues. They amounted to about 226 items, occupying seven full pages (i.e. 14 with addenda) of those vast tomes.

They ranged from the "Lives of the Saints" - 17 volumes, 1872-1889, to "How To Save Fuel," 34 pages, 1874 (really must read that sometime!) Of course the figure naturally includes second and other editions, but it is remarkable enough at that.

On top of all this were the hymns. Mr. Purcell gives us his version of the classic story of the Bishop and "Onward Christian Soldiers." In fact it is Baring-Gould's own version, as quoted from a letter:

I daresay you have heard the story of my bidding the choir alter the line of the hymn from "With the cross of Jesus going on before" to "With the cross of Jesus left behind the door," when the Archbishop of York objected to the cross being carried in procession when he was present at Dalton. The story is apocryphal. He never was at Dalton. The story was invented by my eldest son, when an American interviewer called on him for some "copy" about the hymn; and he invented the story to humbug the interviewer.

Baring-Gould was 84 when he wrote the letter, about events of half a century before. I can only say that by a coincidence, before I read 9

the book, two old Mersea residents told me the same story, freshly and as of fact, about a low-church bishop visiting East Mersea. The only difference was that in their version the line was altered to "hid behind the door" - a rather more telling variant. It doesn't matter. It is a good story - a Baring-Gould story.

17 children

And what was Sabine Baring-Gould like, the man who left Mersea to present himself to his own living among the family's ancestral acres in Devon? He was tall, handsome, usually

unsmiling (didn't he ever twitch the lips, writing at his stand-up desk, at some more unusually acid crack?)

His marriage was the sort of romance which could have happened only to him. He, the patrician, picked out a mill-girl from his Yorkshire congregation, sent her away to be educated up to the position of being married to him - and lived completely happily with her for 46 years after. She bore him 17 children, some of whom he did not appear always to know by sight, and most ably backed him in the parish.

For all that, his opinion of women was a poor one. Mr. Purcell wonders if this were so: his doubts would be resolved if he turned to the original (not the chopped) "Mehalah" - (Woman's) ideal world is that of the bees, in which there is but one queen, and all the other she's are stung to death. Eve was the only woman who tasted of happiness unalloyed, because in Eden she had no sister."

Another class of being of which Baring-Gould took a dim view were bishops. This did the Squareson of Lewtrenchard no good, bishops as a class being notoriously sensitive to lack of affection. So not a single ecclesiastical dignity or preferment came his way - not even an honorary canonry. Yet he did not, in the end, pass unremarked: two bishops (and an archdeacon) attended his funeral.

(This newspaper article was taken from the Essex County Standard dated Friday, 28th June 1957.)

Winefred

May 2nd 1994 was publication day for the latest Praxis reissue of a Baring-Gould title. This time it is "Winefred", which was first published in 1900, and which is set in Seaton. On 11th May 1994, Seaton was the venue for an evening meeting "in celebration" of this reissue, arranged jointly by Devon Libraries and the Axe Valley Heritage Association. The speaker was Norman Barns, Warden of the Seaton Landslip Conservation Area. Mr. Barns knows everything about the great Landslip - "convulsion" as it was termed at the time - which took place in 1839, with another severe slippage in 1840, and gave a most compelling talk, with slides. He pointed out the minor geological error which Baring-Gould makes in the novel, and made educated guesses as to precisely which cottage he was basing that of Job Rattenbury on.

The land along this South-East Devon coast is still sliding into the sea, and is still a place of great romance. The local people have an abiding interest in the events of 1839 and 40, and a love for the natural wilderness which it has now become. In Victorian times, Seaton was of very great renown, with large numbers of trippers coming to see for themselves the alteration to the coastline which was taking place almost before their eyes.

In "Winefred", the characters conduct their lives on the edge of these cliffs, where the river Axe empties into the sea. A ferryman across the Axe is the villain of the tale, who meets a terrible Nemesis when the "convulsion" takes place.

Rebecca Smith of Praxis took copies of the book to sell, and David Shacklock took a collection of early editions of many Baring-Gould titles. All in all, it was a successful way of raising Baring-Gould's profile in that area of Devon. The local bookshop is selling

"Winefred" in substantial numbers, as well as a lovely book about the Landslip as it is now, with its great wealth of unspoilt flora and fauna. It was also drawn to our attention that there is a new book just out about John Rattenbury, who was the real-life smuggler whom Baring-Gould took as the prototype for Jack, the hero of "Winefred".

Clearly, there is considerable enthusiasm for Baring-Gould and his involvement in local history, geology and archaeology in Seaton and its surrounding neighbourhood.

Copies of "Winefred" are available now from Praxis Books, "Sheridan ", Broomers Hill Lane, Pulborough, West Sussex, RH20 2D U Price 16 50 + 75p postage. Paperback. A limited edition of 500 copies

Becky Smith

Clerical Novelist Fined.

A fine of £10, costs, was imposed at Basingstoke on the Rev. Edward Sabine Baring Gould, the author of many novels and other works, for driving a motor-car recklessly on the London road at Hatch Cross.

A local farmer was crossing the main road in a dog-cart, when the car dashed into the horse, knocking it down and cutting it severely, and breaking the shafts of the cart. The farmer was thrown out into a hedge, but was unhurt.

A witness who saw the car just before the accident said it was going at 30 miles an hour.

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Some Spills & Thrills In Bookhunting

It seems to me that there are three main elements in the thrill of bookhunting - one, **discovery**: finding a title you've been seeking for a long time, or one that you were not previously aware existed; two, **bargain** - purchasing a desired item at well below the market level; and three, **admiration** - the enjoyment of a really nice copy, bright pictorial covers perhaps, or some superb colour plates or woodcuts, or maybe some special feature, rare or unique, or simply fascinating. Not often will all three elements coincide in the case of any one item. But most collectors will have a line to draw which will make the copy in question unacceptable - missing pages, level of scruffiness, lack of dustwrapper, later edition, excessive price, insufficiently significant variation. The collector who is not a bookseller will have to consider the difficulty of passing on copies when he finds a better one for his own collection.

Successful book collecting will involve learning from one's mistakes, such as paying a first edition price for something that turns out on closer inspection not to be a first; buying a 'VG' item which after all lacks a page or plate; buying another copy of an expensive title which one already possesses; or most embarrassingly - for a dealer at least - offering an item in good faith, but failing to notice an important defect and having it returned, one's reputation suffering accordingly.

My most recent 'spills' include sending for an 'unrecorded' offered as such in a trade journal, to find myself unwrapping a title by F. Carruthers Gould; and a few months ago in some hurry 'finding' an SBG article listed in the contents of a bound Windsor Magazine, but on getting it home discovering that the article itself was missing. This is certainly a problem for the unwary.

Annuals and magazines in publishers' bindings can usually be relied upon to contain what they claim. But often the original owner would have the monthly numbers bound somewhat haphazardly at a local bindery, without too much concern for completeness, or precise relation of contents to cover date. Then some publishers would bind six months' issues together, running from October to March for instance. You may therefore be seeking an item published towards the end of one year which emerges in its 'volume' form dated the following. Some will have two volumes for each year running from January & July. The year date will thus be insufficient for identification: you will need to know the volume number as well. But the page numbers of the Windsor magazine start with the December issue, and run through to the following November. My problem was that the local binder had stuck to the calendar year - in this case 1903 - thus excluding the December 1902 issue which contained the item seen in the table of contents. Sometimes special Christmas numbers or supplements are bound in with the rest of the year, sometimes not. Twice recently I have found SBG items in such supplements which I might well have passed by since I already had copies of those annual numbers, which contained no evidence of 'extras' available. One of these included a photograph of SBG which I have not seen before.

Another thrill is the discovery of relevant newscuttings left in books that one buys. In a recent purchase of Red Spider which was, in any case, an improvement on my own copy, I

found two such cuttings - which will be reprinted in the Newsletter in due course. Better still would be an SBG letter, or flyleaf signed by him (did he ever?).

Not all SBG contributions to bound magazines &c are clearly flagged - several are indexed as "by the author of Mehalah, John Herring &c". And not all such volumes are indexed at all: so there are undoubtedly some items waiting to be discovered by the patient and painstaking researcher leafing through dusty and weighty tomes. Some indices are at the front and some at the end; a few give titles only and not authors; some have a summary of principal authors on the title page which does not invariably include our man, although he may actually have made a contribution.

I have recently made myself a chart, which will help to save me from endlessly searching through items that I have already scanned - with the risk, of course, that I may still miss something in the process!

So have some thrills, and not too many spills. The hunt is still on. David Shacklock

IN MEMORIAM

S. BARING-GOULD

Soul of the dead, if now Earth's task be done,
May ye return, in some new form, again,
To give us light - coeval with the sun –
Scattering the murky darkness of the brain.
Then might we boast - thy loss our mortal gain.

Thy pen was dropt, as from a palsied hand;
The call had come, although the march was long –
"Onward, thou Christian soldier!" (the command)
"For fairer fields and loftier flights of song."
"Strong was thy soul, and shall be doubly strong!"

The day is past - and ever is the night;
The hymning stars are nearer to thee now.
Immortal son of Devon, as thy right
The Amaranthine wreath is on thy brow –
But more than this will God and men allow'.

Albert Ash Allen

(Submitted by a member)