

Sabine Baring-Gould Appreciation Society Newsletter 1995/96

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SBGAS Newsletter, No 19.

Editorial

Following the discovery of the 'Killerton cache' a year ago one of our members, Harold Kirk-Smith, has come across an unpublished memoir by SBG's half-brother Arthur, which we are delighted to reproduce in part in this issue. Also in this number we feature "Onward Christian Soldiers" and the hymn manuscripts; a charming reminiscence by a Plymouth man published by the Western Morning News on 7th August 1934; and some extracts from the Hurst Johnian of June 1894 - as well as the usual notes.

Our 7th year cover has another medallion portrait, this one photographic, which originally accompanied an article in the Yorkshire Weekly Post of 11th September 1911. The back cover portrays a pile of SBG paperbacks (referred to in the editorial of No. 18) expertly photographed by Mr. Pat Smith, who has kindly taken on the cover production.

Thanks are also due to members Raymond Scott, for spotting the recent letter in the Daily Telegraph; and Peter Blau, for the item from a dealer's catalogue included in the article 'Onwards and Upwards'. Peter has also sent a computer printout of the SBG titles held at the US Library of Congress, and members are welcome to ask for a copy.

David Shacklock

Arthur's Memoir

I think before I proceed further, I ought to take the reader into my confidence, and explain how difficult it is for me, or indeed how difficult it would be for anyone, to write any sort of life of Sabine.

A friend of mine, who as a boy, from reading his books, had created for himself a sort of hero-worship of my half-brother, was ordained at the same time as myself in Exeter Cathedral. He had taken a Curacy at Plymouth, and I went to be Sabine's Curate at Lew Trenchard. I was able to introduce him to Sabine, and his admiration for him greatly increased. Thereafter he set himself to collect all book written by Sabine, and continued his collection till every known work stood in his book-shelves. How great was the task, you may imagine, if you turn to the list at the end of this book. It involved searching the second-hand bookshops all over the Kingdom, travelling to all points of the compass. He has in his collection more of Sabine's books than has the British Museum. He, I thought, was the man to write a Life of Sabine. He declined. He said no-one could, there was not material enough on which to compose a book, besides he only knew him personally so little.

I felt myself that some account ought to be given of his life, for he is one of the great Sons of Devon, and his name, if only from the fact that he wrote "Onward Christian Soldiers", is a well-known name. There are frequent mentions of his name on the Wireless, and for some reason, the writers of really popular hymns evoke particular interest in their story.

So I determined to try and write of him myself, and I will mention the difficulties with which I was confronted.

First, he was thirty-one years older than myself. I was born in the same year that he was ordained. Then, for more than another thirty years I scarcely knew him at all. All I did know of him was gained from chance visits to Lew House. It was only in 1895, when I became his Curate that I grew to know him intimately.

I think, however, that I came to know him more thoroughly after I had left Lew Trenchard, for year by year, I spent four weeks' holiday almost entirely at Lew at my mother's house, for she had gone there to live. Then almost every evening, I either dined with him or walked down the hill for a chat, and that went on till his death.

He seemed pleased to have my company, for he was a very lonely man. He was by no means a hermit, and enjoyed receiving the visits of his friends in the neighbourhood, and returning their calls. But those who could really enter into his interests, and discuss the deeper things of life were scarcely ever available. The two that I remember were Robert Burnard of Plymouth, who accompanied him when he went on his antiquarian expeditions, digging for remains, and excavating on Dartmoor, and Daniel Radford of Mount Tavy, Tavistock, to whom he dedicated his West Country Songs, for he it was who had first urged him to begin that work, a work that Sabine always said was the most important thing he had ever undertaken, and I have heard him say, that if he was ever remembered after

he was dead, it ought to be for the fact that he had collected the Songs when he did, for later the old singing men from whom he had gathered them would have been dead and their songs perished with them.

His older friends, like the Rev. J. M. Gattril and Canon Fowler, who had shared his earlier life, and others, all died before him or had become too feeble for the long journey to Devon.

So I was left, as I felt perhaps better than nobody, and indeed there were topics on which I could enlighten him, topics in which he was more interested than in anything else. He loved to hear by word of mouth what was going on in the Church of England. It had happened that I had taken part in quite a number of Missions in different parts of England, and could also give him an account of the Church in Wales after Disestablishment.

He was a good talker, and, with one exception, would talk on any question, sitting in his armchair by the great granite fire place, with its huge logs even in summertime, and he, smoking a long pipe, the use of which he had only come when, I think, he was in his seventies. He suffered from bronchitis and the doctors had given him some anti-bronchitis stuff to smoke. He matriculated with that, and proceeded with the real thing, and would puff away with the best.

But the one thing he would never talk about was his inner life, his spiritual struggles, what doubts or difficulties he had conquered, how he had been led to take Orders, and what his thoughts were on his ordination. In his Reminiscences, he dismisses his Ordination in a couple of lines, and makes fun of the Bishop in his first, and as far as I know, his only interview with him. That he was deeply read in the troubles of the soul is obvious from his spiritual writings, but though he would speak of the troubles and trials of the souls of others, I never heard him speak of his own trials.

Also, he was very reticent in regard to the pecuniary trials he must have gone through with fourteen children to bring up, and the rebuilding of Lew House must have cost thousands. One could mention other matters, which one would quietly discuss with an intimate friend, that with him ever remained behind the barrier. I always had the feeling that it was not within one's power to understand his character, and I doubt if anyone did, with one exception, and that was with Grace, his wife. I think she did really understand him, and when she died, he was a very forlorn and forsaken man, and it was a true inscription that he had written on her tombstone, "the half of my life".

But you say, were there not his Reminiscences to help you? That I am sorry to say was not the case. There they are, two volumes containing together some six hundred pages, but they deal very little with his personal life. Nearly half of them are filled with descriptions of countries and places that the ordinary mortal has never heard of, or if indeed he has, would hardly be interested in, as Sabine describes their scenery or narrates their history. He gives long accounts of kings and grand dukes and loved heroes, but I am pretty sure that, with the ordinary reader, they would excite but small interest. His Autobiography contains descriptions of various districts, curious characters, and a series of pen pictures

of various leaders in the Oxford Movement and others, but again these would be of little interest, except to a few students. Then there are comments on every sort of thing, criticisms of any number of people, especially himself. He loved to parade his weaknesses, but never goes beneath the surface, so that one could see what the real man is like.

His two books are entertaining, there are some fine passages, which, later on, if I may be allowed to quote, but about himself there is so little. Everything is there except himself.

There is one more source, which has helped numerous biographers, namely the letters the subjects of the biographies have written, but in this case the ground is completely blank. It

is true he may have written interesting letters, but I have never heard of or seen one, except two or three in his Reminiscences full of description of scenery and of some particular place. In my time I had many letters from him, but scarcely one that exceeded in length what could be contained on one half of one side of a sheet of note paper.

What then can one do? In the first part of his Reminiscences, there are here and there little incidents, trifling indeed, but one can make the most of them, as they perhaps will help one to illustrate the formation of his character. It may be we shall see how Our Lord's parable might be quoted with reference to Sabine. It is the parable of the grain cast into the ground, 'which grows, man knows not how, and the earth produces first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear'. Sabine's life was, as it were, planted in Continental ground, then afterwards you see the blade at Cambridge and at Hurstpierpoint, then the ear at Horbury, at Dalton, at East Mersea, where he produced his Magnum Opus, "The Lives of the Saints", and finally in the mellow autumn of his days, when at Lew, book after book was brought forth, till in his 90th year he brings his life to a close with his Reminiscences, surely the 'full corn in the ear'.

"Onward & Upward"

(from the *Western Morning News*, 2nd August 1934) Baring-Gould MS:

A manuscript of much interest to the Westcountry is to be sold this week by Messrs. Sotheby, of New Bond Street. This is the original manuscript of the famous hymn, "*Onward Christian Soldiers*," by Rev. S. Baring-Gould, who was born at Exeter, and who came of an old Devon family. The latter part of his life was also spent in Devon as in 1872 he succeeded to his father's estate and in 1881 he became rector of Lew Trenchard.

The manuscript, which was the property of a Miss E.H. Healey, is likely to attract many bidders, as it is in excellent condition, and it looks almost as fresh as on the day it was written, although the ink is a little faded. It is in clear, fine writing - the hand of a Victorian and a scholar.

(from *The Times*, 4th August 1934)

The manuscript of Baring-Gould's hymn "*Onward Christian Soldiers*", described in *The Times* on July 26, was sold for £24 (Quaritch), and £16 was given for the manuscripts of three other hymns. "*On the Resurrection morning*," "*Through the night of doubt and sorrow*," and "*Now the day is over*."

"Onward Christian Soldiers"

BARING-GOULD, SABINE. (1834-1924). English author of theological works, and hymns, including "*Onward Christian Soldiers*". Superb Autograph Fair Copy Signed, "S.Baring-Gould" of his most famous hymn "*Onward Christian Soldiers*". One page, folio. No place, no date, but after 1864. Baring-Gould has penned forty lines of the hymn in 5 stanzas on a folio leaf, and boldly signed it at the conclusion of the last stanza. This hymn was written in 1864 for a Children's Festival and published in the *Church Times*, London, October 15, 1864. It was set to music by Sir Arthur Sullivan and published in that form in 1871. In nearly twenty years of experience in the autograph field, this is the first time we can recall seeing this hymn written out by its author! Excellent condition.

(from the *Western Morning News*, 12th December 1934)

Gift To Exeter Cathedral:

Autographed Copies of Four Famous Hymns

Exeter Cathedral literary treasures have been enriched by the addition of autographed copies of the four famous hymns composed by the late Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould.

The MSS. were recently presented to the Dean and Chapter by Sir R. Leicester Harmsworth, Bt., and Mr. Harold C. Harmsworth, proprietors of "*The Western Morning News*," and were displayed at a meeting of the Chapter on Saturday.

The Archdeacon of Exeter (Ven.A.H. Thompson), who presided in the absence of the president, expressed the Chapter's warm appreciation of the generosity and kind thoughtfulness of the donors, and the Chapter clerk was instructed to convey to Sir Leicester and Mr. Harold Harmsworth the Chapter's grateful thanks.

The hymns, which will be exhibited in the glass case in the south choir aisle of the Cathedral, are "*Now the day is over*," "*On the resurrection morning*," "*Onward Christian soldiers*," and "*Through the night of doubt and sorrow*."

In Inscribed Cases

Each hymn is contained in a case of crushed red morocco, beautifully decorated with gold tooling, and having two neat clasps. On opening the case, the hymn is seen, framed in red morocco and glass, the whole being in a red plush setting. In gilt lettering there appears the inscription: "In the autograph of S.Baring-Gould."

Opposite the hymn there is inset in red plush a card inscribed:- "Presented to Exeter Cathedral by Sir R. Leicester Harmsworth, Bt. and Mr. Harold Cecil Aubrey Harmsworth."

Purchased at a sale of literary treasures in London, the hymns are in the author's small, neat handwriting, and were presented by him to Miss Evelyn Healey, either on her birthday or on some other special occasion. They are of particular interest to Exonians, because Rev. S. Baring-Gould was born at a house in Dix's Field, Exeter, and was baptized at St. Sidwell's Church, where his parents were married. The date of his birth was January 28th, 1834. He died at Lew Trenchard on January 2nd 1924.

The two biographies (Dickenson p.46ff) and Purcell (p.78ff) reveal that this display was destroyed by enemy action during World War II, and also that there was originally another verse between the 4th and last. Whether the longer version was sung in the Horbury procession of 1965 or not, it disappeared from the hymn books after the 1860s, and does not appear in SBG's manuscripts. The American dealer may have thought he was selling a unique item - hence the inflated asking price of \$3500!

However, the controversy over the origin of the hymn remains. Whit Tuesday 1865 was undoubtedly the occasion of its famous 'outing' at Horbury (Sabine's ordination took place on Whitsunday 1864, and he could not therefore have been involved in the conversations reported as having taken place on the Saturday, or in the printing and rehearsal on Whitsunday). Equally certain is the fact that it was published by the Church Times late in 1864. Purcell's footnote suggesting that it may have originally have been written while SBG was at Hurstpierpoint is not necessarily denied by his claim that he "knocked it off" - or, "I'll write them a hymn" - "in ten minutes"; in fact, it makes the lightning penmanship more credible if it was a composition that was already clearly in his mind. Tantalisingly, no mention whatever is made of the hymn in his own Reminiscences.

And now for a World War I perspective from across the Pond (from the *Literary Digest* of 2nd February, 1918).

A Battle Hymn For Our Army

America's battle-hymn might well be "Onward Christian Soldiers!" and perhaps will be if our fighting men so decide. The suggestion, at any rate, comes from a corporal in the Headquarters Troop of the 101st United States Cavalry, and *Trench and Camp*, the weekly published at the national camps and cantonments for the soldiers, has set out to collect the vote. The hymn has already been used as a marching-song and its effect is always electrical. When the last suffrage parade took place in New York one section comprised the mothers and wives of enlisted men. They carried an enormous banner bearing the stars indicative of their devotion, and when passing the grand stand at the Public Library they sang "Onward, Christian Soldiers." Perhaps it was their farewell message, now taken up by the -men themselves. The corporal, in making his suggestion, writes:

"Do we not need a battle-hymn that characterizes the cause for which we fight and give our very lives and fortunes for its victory? Can it better be expressed than by that old familiar marching hymn of

*Onward, Christian Soldiers! Marching as to war,
With the Cross of Jesus Going on before.*

"Have you ever heard that wonderful hymn blared forth by massed bands? Have you ever listened to your regimental band play it on their way to or from Sunday church-service? Have you ever felt the thrill – the cold chill creep up your back until it came with a rush to the very roots of your hair, when you heard it as you marched on parade in the old home town? Is there anything more inspiring than its marching rhythm - its words and simplicity of meaning! Has it not been the old reliable of band-leaders for years to bring applause from an unresponsive audience? Does it not appeal to you as the battle-hymn of the hour - the very thing we need - that extra something not expressed by bayonets or bursting shells, but the human dynamic force back of them inspired to an overwhelming victorious strength?

"We will not have time to sing it in the trenches nor going over the top, but we can sing it and have our bands play it as they march through the streets of America, England, France, Italy and Russia on our way to the front. It will proclaim to nations everywhere that America has a divine objective.

"Let us then sing it everywhere, on the march, in the divine service - in our hearts. Let it grow and kindle within us. Let us thoroughly understand our objective in that song, so that no matter what the experience or sacrifice may be we will stick to our task with that tenacity which has ever marked American victory. Therefore, let the bands sound off - The Battle-Hymn of America: Onward Christian Soldiers!

A Day With Rev. Baring-Gould, Author Who Wrote Standing

By Dent Dormer

While practising in Plymouth I was honoured by a friendly visit of Rev. Baring-Gould, which resulted in an invitation to spend a day with him at Lew Trenchard.

When I arrived we strolled through the grounds and discussed bird life and the bird sanctuary he was cultivating in the deep gulf fronting his house. This led to a continuation of the same theme at lunch, in which Mrs. Gould and her charming daughter joined.

We then viewed the curios, and experienced a lively time killing moths that had invaded a valuable piece of ancient tapestry, which caused him much concern, until I dispersed the clouds by assuring him that a weak solution of perchloride of mercury in water would settle the matter at once and for ever.

When entering the church which adjoins the mansion he pointed out the sculptured arms over the granite doorway, and referred to his relationship to those gone before. His work-bench was a well-used lengthy table with high legs, placed against the wall, before, and on which, he did all his literary work - standing.

New Start

I asked him if he ever had trouble with publishers in disposing of his work. "Well, of course," said he, "one can't please everybody," and he mentioned a well-known firm who had always returned his script, until he had well made his name, "but, he said, "when I find my work does not please their readers I never patch or alter it, but start again with fresh inspiration and new construction."

When we drew near the ingle-nook we smoked and discussed the good and bad points of the "Indian weed," ecclesiastical carving, and such like, and I noticed when I narrated an exciting incident that he caught my enthusiasm, and his naturally solemn countenance lit up with a fervid glow that made him appear ten years younger.

In my wanderings, whether on Dartmoor or in the vicinity of the Cornish moors, I found Baring-Gould's name and personality remembered and cherished by many cottagers who were proud to think of him as "a gatherer of old songs and a repairer of mystery circles and such like objects. just for the love of old time-worn objects," and at such times heard several anecdotes relative to his activities.

The Show Figure

The event of the month was the function on May 10th, when the Panelling, the Seating and the Bishop's Throne were publicly dedicated. We had many great ones with us, the Bishop bearing his ninety-two years with vigorous equanimity, and keeping the Hall in laughter by his speech at lunch, the Provost, a goodly array of potent, grave, and reverend Fellows, the Member that will be for the East Grinstead division, and Mr. Baring Gould. And much as we value and esteem the others it may be doubted whether Mr. Baring Gould were not on this occasion, vulgarly speaking, the show figure and whether many of our friends were not greatly spurred on by the hope of a glimpse at the author of "Mehalah," "John Herring," and the "Curious Myths." During the little time he was here we heard enough to be able to appreciate Mr. Campion's description of him in ancient days, telling stories to listening crowds, and to feel quite sure that we could walk with him to Chanctonbury, and home via Lewes, and listen all the way to a story in one thrill. His tale of the acrobat who because he did not know a prayer went into Church and there stood on his head, because that was the best he had to offer, will live. During the six years that Mr. Baring Gould was a Master here he did so much, and left so many marks of his personality, that we cannot but understand that he was destined to be as famous as he has become.

The visit of the Bishop was a recognition of our work for which we cannot be too grateful, and we venture to think that Hurst has always its full share of his favour. The widespread fame of Mr. Baring Gould as an author, prolific, versatile, and full of old world lore, attracted many who knew him in his books, and the hearty greetings of friends who remembered Ms Hurst days proved - if that were necessary - the permanence of the impression his character set upon those then privileged to know him.

Punctually at 11.45 a.m. the Choir, Scholars, Fellows, Preacher, Provost, and Bishop mustered at the Library. Before the Bishop was carried the Pastoral Staff, and before the Provost his Cross. On entering the Chapel which was practically filled, the Provost accompanied the Bishop to the Visitor's Stall, and formally invited him to take official possession thereof. He then presented for dedication to the service of God, the stalls, panelling, window and other recent gifts. The Bishop then recited prayers appropriate to the occasion, and the Te Deum was sung as an act of thanksgiving.

Mr. Baring-Gould then preached the sermon, to which it is vain for us in this report to do justice. With singular grace of illustration he drew from the simple phrase "an instrument of ten strings," a noble vindication of the definite religious teaching which our Schools are founded to provide. He began characteristically with a beautiful story, told by Clement of Alexandria, of a competitor at the Greek games who was dismayed, as he came forward to play his prelude for the prize awarded to the best musician, by the snapping of one of the strings of his lyre. Then there leaped upon the lyre a little cricket from the earth and began its shrill song, and to its note the musician so tuned his lyre strings that the mighty concourse broke into a roar of admiration and awarded him the crown of victory. Thus, said the preacher, did the many notes of earth, however good, need for their perfect harmony the sound of the gospel of truth. Strongly he protested against strewing young

lives with the cut flowers of Christian sentiment instead of planting in the root of sound doctrine. The

Apostles were teachers of definite truth, and not mere amiable nonentities. The Christian teacher must not scatter salt that has lost its savour, nor the preacher blow Sunday soap bubbles of empty iridescence - or of emptiness without the iridescence. He panegyricized the beauty of our Chapel and ended an eloquent sermon with a comparison of life to a peal of bells, now mournful, now joyous, but always melodious, always sweet, if dominated by the note of Divine truth.

During the collection of alms was sung Mr. Baring Gould's well-known hymn, "Hail the Sign," and during the day upwards of £50 was contributed to the Chapel Completion Fund.

From the *Hurst Johnian*, June 1894

Some Literary Notes

From Roger Bristow

Inscription in *The Origin & Development of Religious Belief pt II* - "written 50 years ago - antiquated at the time and not worth the paper on which it written. S.Baring-Gould, 1 Aug. 1922".

Pasted into my copy of *In the Roar of the Sea* is a letter: Dear Madam, "I do not think I know the likeness in 'Man of the Times' The story you would like as reminding you of the Orfordness district is "*Richard Cabell* (sic)". I remain, sincerely, S.Baring Gould. Lew Trenchard, N. Devon, Oct 31st/97

From Elizabeth Goldsworthy

Answer to Chris Waters' query about rural bedrooms in the loose sheet accompanying the last issue - see *Old Country Life* ch.III Country Houses. From David Battershell

I am still looking for the 1890s Smith & Elder edition of John Herring. Can anyone help?

From David Shacklock

"The bicentenary of the death of William Romaine, a leading London preacher and horticulturalist of 18th century London, fell on August 2nd. He served curacies in Devon and at Banstead in Surrey", I read in a recent article. The Devon curacy was at Lew Trenchard.

From the Daily Telegraph

Frame of Mind - Sir, Those exercised by the interpretation of All Things Bright and Beautiful (letters, Sept. 13) might bear in mind how that prolific and sadly misremembered

writer, Sabine Baring-Gould, met politically correct criticism of his day with a revised version of his splendid hymn, Ortrvard Christian Soldiers.

Low churchmen had objected to the lines "With the Cross of Jesus/Going on Before", on the grounds that reference to the Cross was tantamount to popery. He obliged them with this alternative:

Onward Christian Soldiers, Marching as to war, With the Cross of Jesus, Left behind the door. (But see Purcell p.74f) Laurence Cotterell, St. Paul's Cray, Kent. Continued on page 16

More printed references:

Theo Brown - DEVON GHOSTS - Jarrold 1982 (pbk): 5 refs, including the haunting of Lew Trenchard churchyard by pigs - and a picture.

Stan Jarvis - A VIEW INTO ESSEX - Halton 1979 - one ref. 'Mehala'.

Lucinda Lambton's Magnificent Menagerie - QPD) 1992 (originally Harper/Collins) - quotations from The Vicar of Morwenstow

David Scott Fox - SAINT GEORGE - Kensal Press 1983 - p.47f; 1S9 A First Cornish Anthology - Mark Press 1969 - 32. Hawker the eccentric Cornish parson (p.39f).

SBGAS Newsletter, No 20.

Editorial

In a recent letter our Hon. Treasurer was "thinking aloud: what *are* the average member's B-G interests? Family, books, songs, house and church?" I could not answer that question, nor do I believe that there is such a person as an average member - though the musing above was in relation to our Hon. Secretary's idea of a 'Walkabout' (with cars!) of sites connected with some of SBG's novels, ending up at Lew Trenchard with a folksong session with the Wren Trust. A great idea! Similar events could be arranged in other parts of the country - the East and the South have yet to hold 'Gatherings', but would they attract enough members to make them viable? By the time you receive this there may be a more definite proposal for this year.

Reverting to the original question of interests - it is hoped that while most members will have some particular enthusiasm (and will be prepared to share that in material for the newsletter or contribution to an annual event), all will benefit from the presentation of other aspects of SBG's life and connected items, and some will be stimulated to set out on research and fact finding in areas they have not previously delved into. The possibilities are almost endless.

In this issue we devote the centre section to Keith Lister's Yorkshire piece and welcome Sophie Dupré's excerpt from her catalogue, under the title 'The Susannah Warren Correspondence'. The items are still for sale if anyone has a long enough purse - and she is not making anything on them!

The British Library is now taking an interest in our newsletter and claiming the right to receive all back issues! Have we a lawyer in the house? - or anyone out there prepared to take on the role of Editor?! Computer literacy might be an advantage for the late 1990s.

David Shacklock

The Year of '96

This year is the centenary of the publication of one of Sabine's still most sought after novels, *The Broom-Squire*, set in the area of Surrey around the Devil's Punch Bowl between Godalming and Petersfield. It is the story of Mehetabel, another strangely named orphan girl who gets into an unhappy marriage with Jonas Kink, the Broom-Squire of the title, one of a number of gypsy squatters living primitively in the Punchbowl. Convincing characterisation and teasing plot carry the reader along, together with a liberal sprinkling of historical and topographical information concerning the iron trade and its demise, the marshland known as 'The Moor', the three stages of courting (yardin', aiblen', and waistin'), and a description of the gravestone in Thursley churchyard of the sailor murdered on Sep. 24th 1786 (the Hindhead murder), which event provided Sabine with the seed for his story. The book contains twelve illustrations by Frank Dadd, and was twice reprinted in the year of publication. Roger Bristow's bibliography reports the most recent edition as the 13th in 1929.

The other volume form title for 1896 was *Dartmoor Idylls*, containing eleven short stories, or anecdotal accounts, of some of the characters and scenes encountered by the author. One of them, Jonas Coaker, was known as 'The Poet of the Moor' and provided SBG with some of his folksong material, (his cottage was depicted on the editorial page of the last issue). Another item, '*Green Rushes, O!*', has first appeared the previous year in *Chambers Journal* (p.604-8). However, perhaps *Guavas the Tinner* should also be included here despite its 1897 title page date. My copy has its advertisement section dated Nov. 1896, and maybe Methuen were following the tradition of other publishers such as Blackie in issuing their Christmas titles with the following year's date. (A review of *Guavas* will appear in a later newsletter).

Other Dartmoor related items appeared in vol. 28 of the *Report and Transactions of the Devonshire Association*: (1) Prehistoric Remains on Dartmoor, and (2) 3rd Report of the Dartmoor Exploration Committee (with R.Burnard and others).

In *Good Words* (Isbister) (July-September) SBG provided the historical background and text of some correspondence of one Jane Davies with his great uncle Gen. Sir Edward Sabine, after whom he had been named, under the title 'An Old Maid's letters', dated IR()9-I I. There are interesting references to Corunna and the Walcheren Expedition, other notables of the time such as Mrs. Hannah More, and to contemporary medical practices leading to SBG's comment, "It is marvellous how many old ladies are left when thus bebolused, bedrenched and beleached."

The Sunday Magazine (Isbister) contains three articles on old furniture: the livery cupboard, the chair or settle, and the cradle. (Some slapdash editing is evident here in the titling).

Chambers Journal - handsome volumes these, but unfortunately this particular year is still missing from my collection - has two articles: 'The Cornish Mining Captain' and 'Our Hedges'.

Cassells Family Magazine presents 'EnglishCave-Dwellers of Today'. The Magazine of Music includes a piece entitled 'English Opera'

Finally, 'The Two Signs', a poem, was published with two others already found in the *Silver Store*, in a collection edited by W.H.K. Wright entitled *West Country Poets: their Lives and Works* (Elliott Stock).

David Shacklock

The Susannah Warren Correspondence

Autograph Letters & Manuscripts Baring-Gould (Sabine, 1834-1924, Divine And Author)

Important collection of four A:SS to Miss Susannah Warren, the first letter says that he is a "poor draughtsman for figures ... suggesting instead "a reproduction of the curious painting of a Pixy frolic we have , at Lew Trenchard, date William & Mary I fancy. Very quaint indeed ... quite an antiquarian curiosity ... ", discussing the problems of getting a good photograph which would show the colours properly and in a postscript describing it, "The painting contains hundreds of figures, rowing in egg-shells, lighting, corpse-candles, dancing in rings, playing Jack O'Lanterns & performing innumerable antics. It is the oldest painting I know ... ".

The next letter tells her that she is "welcome to reproduce my account of the Wild Huntsman but it must not be without acknowledgement ... I never heard of the Gabriel hounds. I think the name must be a corruption of some mythological term. I believe that the howling of the wind suggested the idea of the dog or wolf in the myth of the Wild Huntsman, and the flare of lightning gave the notion of its breathing flames ... ", he continues by describing some Devonshire myths "from a rift in the crags leap forth black hounds with blazing eyes, & breathing fire ... followed by a tall black huntsman riding on a three legged horse. This is undoubtedly Odin ... On Holdslreet ... runs nightly the black hound of Lady Howard ... When it has plucked all the blades of grass its release will have come & Lady Howard's pardon will be sealed ... ", and he continues with other local stories, "I have any amount of material concerning the wild huntsman & his dogs & could fill a volume ... I am collecting Yorkshire folklore, household tales & ballads ... generally neglected, & I know no English collection. Halliwell's is miserably imperfect ..." and he explains the importance of these tales, which are found in different forms throughout the world but "only the leading features are unmistakably identical. The whole rests on a mythological foundation exhibiting the year in its spring tide abundance yielding gold & corn, whilst it is accompanied with thunderstorms ... I hope soon to have a good stock of West Riding myths

The third letter is written on his return from a "little run on the Yorkshire moors ...", he says he will "be glad to see your MS at any time ... If I am to make some notes to your work I shall have to refer to them. But I send you Kelly's Indo European Folklore as a good resumé of two or three important Ysiman(?) works on the subject ..." and discussing Halliwell "I admire him amazingly for his contribution to English folklore, Archaeology etc ... All I meant when I said that his collection of household tales was sadly deficient, was that it was a very small contribution to a most valuable subject ..." He tells her in a postscript that he has just started "work on the Curiosities of Popular Superstitions viz ... Divination ... Men with tails, Pig faced women, Toads living in the stomach, Salamanders etc ...".

The final letter returns her work "on Northumbrian folklore ... the amount of matter and the valuable nature of it has delighted me ..." promising to send some notes and "a few Sundry superstitions and customs gathered in various parts of England ... I see you have not given any household rhymes or riddles ... would they not be a good addition? What you

you [sic] say to adding on to the book my collection of household tales, picked up in Devonshire & in Yorkshire ... The household tales of England are especially valuable as they have not yet been collected, & a [loud of - French tales such as Puss in Boots, Cinderella etc have taken their place ...", 11 sides 8vo., Horbury, Wakefield, 26th July to 27th November 1865,

Together with two original photographs, one of a house, titled "Hazlewood. Where Miss Susanne Warren lived. for 40 ears. 6" x 4". and the other a photo of the old lady in black dress and white bonnet, writing, with the end or an ALS underneath "Always yr affte aunt Sus. Warren", 5 1/2" x 4". [SD4914] £475

Baring-Gould (Sabine 1834-1924, Divine and Author)

Interesting pair of ALSs to his publisher about his novel "Kitty Alone" the first sending "the first 19 chapters" as he wanted the first part of his novel by July 1st, telling him that "there will be in all 54 or 55. I do hope it will commend itself to you. It is very difficult to know what will please ... in constructing a plot one has to take that which presents itself to the mind at the time. I have more written ... the last 3 chaps I send you will want a thorough looking through before given to the printer ...", the second sends the "1st vol of 'Kitty Alone' ... tile rest shall follow in a few days when revised. I go to the S. of France on 23 Oct & if possible would like to correct the proofs ... before I go ...", each 1 side 8vo., Lew Trenchard, Devon, 24th June & 4th October 1893. [SD1S35] £195

Sophie Dupré, 14 The Green, Calne. Wilts. SN11 8DQ Tel: (01249) 821 121

Baring-Gould's Yorkshire - 1864-1871

A Visit to Knaresborough, North Yorkshire

Those not familiar with Yorkshire may be forgiven for thinking that it is wholly industrial and dominated by dark satanic mills. In reality there are many beautiful and hidden places only a few miles from the major centres of industry. Such a place is the historic market town of Knaresborough situated on the River Nidd, close to Harrogate, Ripon and York.

Visitors may row or punt on the river, climb the steep strps to the 14th century ruined castle demolished by the Roundheads and look down on the Victorian stone railway bridge which spans the river, providing a wonderful backdrop for photographs. Perhaps listen to a brass band, then walk through well-kept gardens to the ancient market place (1) and discover 'The Oldest Chymist Shoppe in England'. After taking refreshment in one of the many tcashops, visit the 14th century courthouse, Parish Church and wooded riverside picnic areas. See the famous dropping well where personal and household items are petrified whilst suspended beneath a curtain of water rich in mincrals. Visit the eerie wishing well and cave where the prophetess Mother Shipton is reputed to have been born

in 1488. Her prophecies were first published in 1663 but suffered from forgery in Victorian times.

Beyond the Low Bridge along Abbey Road, is a rare medieval wayside shrine known as 'The Chapel of our Lady of the Crag'. Also known as St. Robert's Chapel (2) it was excavated under licence in 1408 and was later adorned with a strange sworded figure of a knight which guards its entrance. Visits can be made by prior arrangement.

Beside the chapel is a dwelling hewn out of the same lofty limestone cliff face by the Hill family in the late 1700's. Its military appearance and associations with a Duchess attracted the name Fort Montagu. Locally known as 'The House in The Rock' it is owned by An)plcforth College and has been occupied by (lie satne family for five generations. It is open to visitors during the summer (3). A mile or so down river, beyond what was once the site of a Trinitarian Priory, is the cave once occupied by Robert Flower (St. Robert) a 13th century hermit and healer. His empty tomb and the foundations of a chapel are adjacent. The hermitage became infamous in 1759 when Eugene Aram, a schoolmaster, was convicted of murdering one Daniel Clark whose body had remained buried inside the cave since his murder in 1745. The crime was only detected when Aram's accomplice eventually turned Kings evidence. On conviction at York Assizes Aram was transported to Knaresborough where he was hung in chains.

Sabine's earliest literary link with the town appears to have been in Blind Jack of Knareborough. This popular character known as John "Blind Jack" Metcalf (1717-1910) was blinded as a child after contracting smallpox. A lively character, he became a military musician, joined the hunt and engaged in other manly pursuits. After running off with another man's 'wife to be' the night before the wedding, he subsequently became a successful builder of bridges and roads! The story, with 36 others, was published in Yorkshire Oddities, Incidents and strange Events (4) in 1874, which After re-issue in abridges form in 1987, went on to become a best selling Yorkshire title.

In Sabine's hagiography, The Lives of the Saints (5), published between 1872-7, there is a detailed 10 page biography of St. Robert of Knaresborough, which contains interesting local references. Sabine comments that although St. Robert was made a saint within 20 years of his death, he believes he was never canonized.

St. Robert and the caves also find a place in Sabine's Cliff Castles and Cave Dwellings of Europe (6). The latter being an historical account of refuges, castles, robbers' dens and sepulchres found in Flurope.

As we know, Sabine always had 'an eye' for unusual characters and events, and during his stay of over seven years in Yorkshire he discovered both! Knaresborough and its people clearly appcaled to him, but whether he actually visited to investigate first-hand, or merely relied upon thee accounts of olhers is not clear. Assuming that he did visit, perhaps by train, one could imagine him leaving Grace and the children to amuse themselves in the bustling ancient market place or playing down by the river whilst he investigated. On

second thoughts, he probably strode out on the 24-mile return journey from Dalton and left them at home!

Next time you are in Yorkshire I can recommend a visit to Knaresborough (7). If you are able to pre-read Sabine's articles on the Town first (and hopefully discover further articles), then so much the better! For those of you like my wife Sylvia and myself, who are fortunate enough to be regular visitors to the town, I hope you have found something of interest in this article.

Keith Lister,

Yorkshire Representative of SBGAS

(1) Market held on Wednesdays.

(2) Open by prior arrangement. Enquiries to (7) below.

(3) Closed for renovation from 1995. Enquiries to (6) below.

(4) Yorkshire Oddities and Strange Events. Hodges 1874 P.120-176. (Smith Settle reprint 1997 p. 85-112).

(5) Lives of The Saints. New Edition 1999 Vol. 10, p.364-373.

(6) Cliff Castles and Cave Dwellings of Europe, Seeley &Co. 1911. p.220-21.

(7) Tourist Information Tel: Knaresborough 01423-866-886 (Summer) or Harrogate 01423-525-666 (all year)

Second Alphabetical List of Printed Material containing SBG References Noted So Far

(Roman numeral = Issue No; Arabic = Page)

(The) Anglican Parochial Clergy XVII

Anthology of Essex XV

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(Stephan) XV

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Children's Encyclopaedia (Mee)

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Conan Doyle XIV/12

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(The) Countryman's Chapbook XVIII

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Dartmoor in All its Moods XV

Dartmoor Reflections XVII

Dartmoor Seasons XIII & XVII

Days in Cornwall XIV/12

Days on Dartmoor XIV/12

(The) Delectable West XVI

Devon (GWR) XIV/12

Devon (Hoskins) XIII

Devon (Jellicoe & Mayne) XII/S

Devon &c (Grey Guide) XV Devon Ghosts XIX

Devon Villages X111

Devonshire South West XIV/12

England (Ensor) XVII

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English History in English Fiction X11/12 Essex (Black) XV

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Essex (Mee) X11/6

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A) First Cornish Anthology XIX

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Glorious Devon XV God-dc Devon XVII
(A) Guide to Books XIV
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(The) Homeland of English Authors XVII
(A) Hundred Years Ago XVIII
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(The) Illustrated Family Hymn Book XVI11
(An) Invitation to Devon XIV
(A) Lectionary of Christian Prose XIV
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(The) Living Breath of Cornwall XIV/12
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Lucinda Lambton's Magnificent Menagerie XIX Lydford Lives XVII
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Memoirs of Sir CC de Crespigny XX

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Nathaniel Woodard XVII Nineteenth Century Iceland XII (The) North East of Cornwall
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Notes & Queries XIII
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(The) Oxford Book of the Supernatural XX (The) Oxford Song Book XX
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(The) Romance of the Men of Devon XVII Saint George XIX
Saints in Folklore XIV/12
St.Ives (Red Guide) XV
St.Michael de Rupe XV
Salcombe (Red Guide) XIII
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South Devon (Born) XIII
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Tradition & Invention in Ghost Stories XX Under Dartmoor Hills XIV
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West Country Short Stories XV
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Young England (Vol.XI,VIII) XVIII

Dartmoor Idylls

A review from the Illustrated London News , Sep.12th 1896

LITERATURE

Mr. Baring-Gould's New Volume

Mr. Baring-Gould is at once versatile and inexhaustible. You might almost apply to him not only Johnson's hackneyed compliment to Goldsmith, "Qui nuhum fere scribendi," etc; but even the King's compliment to Johnson, "I do not think you borrow much from anybody," said Farmer George. "I think, your Majesty, I've already done my part as a writer." "I should have thought so too," rejoined the King, "if you had not written so well." Certainly Mr. Baring-Gould has written much and well and variously without either borrowing from others or repeating himself. In his last book of short stories, *Dartmoor Idylls* (Methuen and Co.), he has indeed occasionally borrowed - but only from local tradition - the dry bones he makes live for us; for "Ephraim's Pinch" is historical, and the gruesome story of the corpse salted down in the chest which the guest discovered in his bed-room, is a legend of the "Warren Inn". Upon his mentioning his discovery next morning at breakfast, his hostess exclaimed carelessly, "Oh, it's only old vayther. The frost be that hard, the snow that deep, us can't.carr'n yet awhile to Lydford Churchyard to bury'n, so us has salted'n in."

Surely, too, even Mr. Baring-Gould's imagination, which can he sufficiently grotesque, is not responsible for the burial of the blind hero of "Goosie-Vair" with a pipe stuffed with sage and onions slipped between the dead lips? Having dined once - on his wedding day - on goose, he had kept the anniversary of this marriage feast ever after by having a commemorative whiff of sage and onions out of his pipe; and his brother-in-law put the pipe thus charged between his dead lips in order that his sister at the Resurrection might identify her husband. "I thought I'd gi'e my sister a bit o'surprise and pleasure like. Her'll be walking in the heavenly garding, and all at once her'll smell a snitch o' sage and ingins, and her'll jump up and say, "Tes Goosie-Vair, and there be my Thomas Coleman havin' his pipe o' sage and ingins - sure as iver, it be he comin',' and her'll run to the gates and be the first to welcome he - comin' along smokin' of his pipe."

This obviously is an old story happily adapted and humorously dressed up by the author. It must not be supposed that all, or even most of the tales in the volume are of this grotesque and gruesome kind, since many of them are as idyllic as the title of the book suggests.

By the way, it is as well to warn readers who dread consumption for themselves or for their friends that Mr. Baring-Gould's specific for it is not to be relied on. "It is said that consumption is known on Dartmoor*. This perhaps is due largely, if not wholly, to the turf smoke - strongly antiseptic - that pervades every dwelling." But the Irish peat-burning peasantry are far indeed from enjoying this immunity.

[* There should, surely, be a negative inserted somewhere here – MRG]

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W.H. Hoskins - HISTORY FROM THE FARM - Faber - p.391 Chimsworthy + plate

ed. George A.B. Dewar - MEMOIRS OF SIR CLAUDE CHAMPION DE CRESPIGNY -
Lawrence & Bullen 1897 - p.91 qu. re sporting parsons

Herbert W. Tompkins - COMPANION INTO ESSEX - Methuen - p.184 ref. Mehalah &
Wivenhoe

Stewart M. Ellis - MAINLY VICTORIAN - Hutchinson 1924 - p.303-7 - 'Mr. Baring-Gould's
Memoirs' (Fortnightly Review Sep.1923)

Arthur L. Salmon - THE CORNWALL COAST - TFU (The County Coast series) 1910 -
p.36 qu. re Looe; p.51 on derivation of Fowey; p.326, 329 re In the Roar of the Sea, St.
Enodoc's Church & Cruel Coppinger; p.365 re Vicar of Morwenstow &c; p.379 re The
Gaverocks

Walter Johnson - BYWAYS IN BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY - CUP 1912 - P.96 ref.holy wells
of Cornwall (A Book of the West 11 p.391); p.202 wheels of fortune (A Book of Brittany
n.198f); p.231 deflected channels (A Book of Brittany p.193); p.443 animals suspended
from trees (Westmeston - Folk-Lore IV p.6)

Ed. D.J. Enright - THE OXFORD BOOK OF THE SUPERNATURAL - OUP 1994 - qu.Vicar
of Morwenstow & A Book of the West (p. 192f. 224, 415, 427f, 472, 518f; also 399f see
next entry)

K.M. Briggs - Tradition & Invention in Ghost Stories - 1980 (as above) Songs of the West
Country - David & Charles

SBGAS Newsletter, No 21.

Editorial

The major item in this issue is Patrick Hutton's long-awaited piece, 'So Runs The Tale', in which he teases out a comparison between SBG and Robert Hawker, and follows up the controversy raised by SBG's 'Hawker of Morwenstow'. Our former Hon. Secretary has been worried about possible offence caused to Baring-Gould family members - or fans! - but your Editor has encouraged him to publish, and hopefully not be damned! Rather I hope it will encourage others to do a bit of original research.

Speaking of research and publication, we are looking forward to the day when the efforts of two of our members, Keith Lister and Harold Kirk-Smith reach fruition. I am also trying to persuade another member to write an article for 'Book and Magazine Collector'. At my last enquiry there are no further reprints planned by Rebecca Smith at Praxis Books for the moment, but Richard Dalby is intending to have 'A Book of Ghosts' reprinted later this year, as well as continuing to anthologise single SBG ghost stories. The most recent to appear (story, that is) was 'H.P.' in 'The Mammoth Book of Victorian and Edwardian Ghost Stories' (Robinson pbk £5.99).

I cannot speak for the other booksellers among our membership, but compared with the effort of producing lists, the rewards do not generally seem worthwhile. Certainly books seem to sell better 'on sight' at gatherings, and understandably so. Apart from any other consideration, postage adds substantially to the price. However it might be more productive for all parties if members were to send 'books wanted' lists, either via the newsletter mailing, or specifically to our bookselling members. Roger Bristow, Patrick Hutton and I all hold fairly substantial stocks of SBG titles, and Roger Collicott of Honiton and Richard Parry of Exeter Rare Books would, I am sure, be happy to receive requests. If other members are also 'traders' please let me know. None of these remarks of course preclude anyone sending in 'for sale' lists in the usual way.

David Shacklock

Not such a favourable report ...

A review from the *Anti-Jacobin*, June 27th, 1891, Page 529 West-Country Songs and Ballads

It is strange that Mr Baring-Gould should have taken so much trouble to collect the traditional ballads and songs of the West of England and should then have treated his material in so slovenly and uncritical a manner. But perhaps it is not strange when we consider the unhappy development of the writer of 'Mehalah', that tragic masterpiece, into the writer of 'In Troubadour Land', a farcical guide book to Provence. Mr Baring-Gould has lost his style, he has lost all respect for his work or his public, he is not careful to write grammatically.

He has still, however preserved that interest in local eccentricities which has always been one of his characteristics and it is this interest which led him to collect from the mouths of the people in Devon and Cornwall some 300 traditional songs and tunes of which a hundred and ten are printed in the volume before us. 'In some instances', he tells us in the preface 'the ballads reveal a rudeness of manner and morals that make (sic) it impossible for me to publish the works exactly. We have endeavoured to obtain 3 or 4 versions of the same ballad and are by this means enabled to arrive at what we believe to be the most correct form of both. But as to the antiquary everything is important, exactly as obtained, uncleaned from rust and unpolished it is the intention of Mr Sheppard and myself to deposit a couple of copies of the songs and ballads, exactly as taken down, one in the Library of the Exeter and the other in that of the Plymouth Institution, for reference ...what we have done is to give samples of the various sorts, with not too large a preponderance of the earliest and most ancient melodies which, though to us of the highest interest, would not perhaps, meet with general appreciation.'" In a note to the fourth part Mr Baring-Gould's coadjutor Mr Sheppard writes that his drive has been to present the melodies 'in a form acceptable to the general public and in which they may hold their own in the great competition for public favour. Should they fail to do this' adds Mr Sheppard, 'they have yet another leg to stand upon; and put in their plea for some consideration as not ephemeral production (of whatever merit) but as melodies which may honestly claim to a place in a national collection of the genuine songs of the British people.' In other words Mr Baring-Gould and Mr Sheppard, after collecting these songs from the old song men - songs whose interest lies in their antiquity, their characteristic western flavour - have found no difficulty in polishing them up for the 'drawing room'. We should have thought that at all events Mr Baring-Gould's sense of humour would have allowed him to discern the absurdity of such a statement as Mr Sheppard's: If the ballads of the west cannot succeed in pleasing the drawing room public yet they are ballads of the west and may be acceptable of that ground.

Had the collection been properly edited it would have been an addition of real value to what we know of English folk songs. As it is the melodies seem to have been treated with deference, and not edited, like the words out of all recognition. For so much we cannot but be grateful. And when Mr Baring-Gould tells us that the words have been altered, 'to avoid grossness or banalities', he is not to be blamed as far as the grossness is concerned. But

we are not so ready to accept the re-writing of a ballad because Mr Baring-Gould has decided it is banal. Here he is in danger of going beyond the duty of an editor. He himself, however, has no scruples of conscience and does not even pay so much homage to editorial virtue as to conceal his shortcomings and misdemeanours. Thus in giving the amusing ballad of Widdicombe Fair - at present, as he observes, the best known and most popular of Devonshire songs - he calmly says in a note, 'There is one more verse in the

original which I have been forced to omit from lack of room.' Every page of the notes contains statements like these: 'I have ventured to add the last verse;' 'There were 10 verses in the original: I have cut them down to 7,' 'The words ... were of no merit.' We cannot feel at all sure that this is as it should be and it happens too, that Mr Baring-Gould is not a clever versifier.

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Notes & Queries 1895 - review of English Minstrelsie 11 p.337.

THE OXFORD DICTIONARY OF NURSERY RHYMES, Iona & Peter Opie, OUP 1952 (rpt/corr): intro XXV A Book of Nursery Songs & Rhymes 1895; p.24 oral collection of SBG &c among 'Pretty Songs for Little Masters & Misses' printed in 18th cent; p.80 'Whar' hae ye been a' day: possible link with 'Lord Randal' & ref. A Garland of Country Song 1894; p.112 the carrion crow ref. A Garland of Country Song 1895; p.139 the cuckoo ref. as previous; p.181. A Frog he would a wooing go' ref. as previous & refrain cont. words 'Kitty Alone'; p.226 rel. Curious Myths of the Middle Ages 1866: theory re Jack & Jill; p.304 ref. Songs of the West 1891 'Matthew, Mark Luke & John; p.415 ref. as previous re. Tommy O'Lin; p.424 ref. A Garland of Country Song 1895 alternative version of 'Did you see my Wife?'

REMINISCENCES OF AN OLD WEST COUNTRY CLERGYMAN, The Rev.W.L. Thornton. 1st series Iredale 1897 p.311 remarks on clergymen. 2nd series, 1899, p256 ref. Joyce in John Herring.

THE CHURCHES OF DEVON, J.M. Sladen, D&C 1968:p.83 rescue ofscreen woodwork removed by SBG's grandfather; p.92 drawing of Kenton pulpit enabling later restoration; p.101 regarded St.James West Teignmouth as 'hideous'.

A Community Arts Project For Lewtrenchard

Paul Wilson & Keith Urro

It is proposed that Devon's leading Community Folk Arts Organisation WREN TRUST, works with Lewtrenchard Primary School and others still to be identified on a Village-based Community Arts Project, focusing on the Folk Song collecting of the Rev. Sabine Baring Gould.

Baring Gould lived at Lewtrenchard while he undertook his collecting and this project would aim not only to re-emphasise the value of his work, but to creatively re-interpret the themes thrown up by the collection such as social history, modal music, the topography of the area, folk songs and local stories.

Any of these might be made into performance pieces by the children at the school or others, studied by local historians, photographed or otherwise recorded for future work. The project would use the photography and fine art skills and considerable I.T. resources of the school.

Timing

A long 'lead in' to such a big project is necessary to raise profile, funding and performance standards. The project is seen as coming to fruition sometime in the Summer/Autumn of 1997. An early start is also desirable - a meeting to start spreading the word to others who might be enthusiastic (e.g. School Governors) should take place very soon Spring '96), and it would be good to run a short project as a precursor to the main celebration. This might be a reinvigorating of the Parish Walk project for example in Autumn 1996.

People

Anyone living in or near the Parish, or who would have an interest in Baring Gould, Village Celebrations, School activities or any of the artistic disciplines would be welcome to join in: for example the W.I., Business Group, Parish Council, Parish Project Group. The project will be co-ordinated by Wren Trust in touch with all the participants.

Where the project will happen

The project is seen as having very much a Lewtrenchard/ Lewdown focus and we will need to find an appropriate venue for the final event in the area. Preparation work might happen either at the school, the Parish Hall or other public places. Research work will probably reach into private houses, libraries or other collections of material.

The final event (Summer/Autumn '97) will be dependent on what skills come forward and what kind of thing local people want to do. but it should have a strong performance element, reflecting the nature of the material collected by Baring Gould which will act as a guide and anchor for the whole thing.

Paul Wilson, Wren Trust / Keith Urro

Lewtrenchard Primary School December/January 1996

The Wren Trust

Lew Trenchard School has been approached by the Wren Trust to initiate a project focusing on the folk song collecting of the Rev. Sabine Baring Gould. This is good news for the school and community and will culminate in a presentation to include as many people in the community as possible. It is also hoped that this project , can revive the Parish Walk project for which the foundations still exist.

I have enclosed a joint circular/letter from Paul Wilson of the Wren Trust and myself. I hope you can find time to read this and support this initiative and to pass the word and encourage others to participate. All enquiries can be made through me at the school. A meeting has been arranged to outline this community project in more detail. The date is Monday 5 February at 7.00 p.m. in Lew Trenchard School Hall. Please come along and support this exciting venture.

For your information: What is the Wren Trust?

The Wren Trust's role is to put people of all ages in touch with their natural creativity. Using music and performance, in its widest sense, can help forge a sense of community and place for today. Wren Trust's activities include children's music education, adult music workshops plus various live performances, song-writing activities and special celebratory events.

The Wren Trust projects often have an historical perspective based on the many voices of the past. The Trust devotes a considerable amount of time researching stories that have been passed down in families, songs from various collections, eye witness accounts, personal memorabilia and local gossip as well as recognised archives and county-wide resources.

The co-founders, Marilyn Tucker and Paul Wilson are based in Okehampton. Their work takes them into Devon, Cornwall, Somerset and Dorset.

So Runs The Tale: Hawker and Baring-Gould

One of the many endearing beliefs of Hawker of Morwenstow derives from the zig-zag moulding which is so marvellously exemplified in the Norman arches of Morwenstow church. He wrote in 1865:

'The zig-zag moulding that they call in a fine phrase chevron pattern is I say the Ripple on Gennesaret the sea of sighs the Lake of the Paraclete, and is significant of the Holy Spirit of God couching and gliding on the Water wherein we become Children of the Font.'

His best-known biographer, Sabine Baring-Gould, wrote on the same subject: 'When first I visited the church, I exclaimed at the beauty of the zig-zag moulding.

"Zig-zag! Zig-zag!" echoed the vicar scornfully. "Do you not see that it is near the font that this ornament occurs? It is the ripple of the lake of Genesareth, the Spirit breathing upon the waters of baptism. Look without the church - there is the restless old ocean thundering with all his waves, you can hear the roar from here. Look within. All is calm: there plays over the baptismal pool only the Dove who fans it into ripples with his healing wings."

The voice of Baring-Gould is more apparent than the voice of Hawker in that second quotation, and it also provides the only evidence that I have been able to find of the two men having actually met. They corresponded two years before Hawker's death about St. Morwenna when Baring-Gould was still at East Mersea and was researching his *Lives of the Saints*. But Hawker's widow, in the course of her vigorous protest about the first edition of 'The Vicar of Morwenstow', described its author as 'one whose personal knowledge of Mr Hawker was scarcely that of a mere acquaintance.'

Hawker died in August 1875, and 'The Vicar of Morwenstow' was published less than a year later. It is perhaps Baring-Gould's most significant book, for two reasons, one short-term and the other long-term. It caused immediate anger among Hawker's friends, grief to his widow and family, and widespread controversy, as apart from being in Pauline Hawker's words 'full of misstatements', it publicised Hawker's taste for opium and (patently a far greater sin at the time) his deathbed conversion to Roman Catholicism. In the long term, it has run in to many editions and probably remains, despite Piers Brendon's admirable biography published in 1975, the most popular book about Hawker. Indeed, without it he might have been forgotten.

How very regrettable therefore that it is unworthy of both its author and its subject. Of course it is a very good entertaining read: 'a gossipy book', as Baring-Gould calls it. In his eagerness to amuse, he swamps the reader with stories of Hawker of varying degrees of veracity, the overall effect being to portray him as a raffish joke-figure. Just one example, from many: Baring-Gould describes the circumstances of Hawker's first marriage.

'...when he retired to Stratton for his long vacation in 1824, his father told him that it was impossible for him to send him back to the university. But Robert Hawker had made up his

mind that finish his career at College he would. He had recourse to the following expedient.

There lived at Whitstone, near Holsworthy, four Miss l'ans, daughters of Colonel l'ans. They had been left with an annuity of £200 apiece, as well as lands and a handsome place. At the time when Mr Jacob Hawker announced to his son that a return to Oxford was impossible, the four ladies were at Efford, near Bude, a farm and house leased from Sir Thomas Acland. Directly that Robert Hawker learnt his father's decision, without waiting to put on his hat, he ran from Stratton to Bude, arrived hot and blown at Efford, and proposed to Miss Charlotte l'ans to become his wife. The lady was then aged forty-one, one year older than his mother; she was his godmother, and had taught him his letters. Miss Charlotte l'ans accepted him, and they were married in November, when he was twenty.'

So far as one can check on the details, they tend towards inaccuracy. She was not his godmother, they had not met until he was 8; and they were married in 1823, not 1824. Hawker was indeed twenty, but on page 1 line 2 of the book his biographer was a year out with his date of birth (actually 1803). It is worth adding that the marriage was a very happy one, right through to Charlotte's death in 1863. But what caused the real upset was that word 'expedient'. Not too nice even now, in these morally relaxed times, but then ... It drew this blast from the 'Athenaeum' in a review of the book dated March 25th 1876:

'We read all this with utter amazement; not so much because there is scarcely a word of truth in the details, but because it is beyond our comprehension how, having written so far, i.e. nine pages out of three hundred, Mr Gould could fancy it was right to go on with his memoir. "He had recourse to the following expedient"; in other words, the biographer had no scruple in convicting a man, who is the subject of his memoir, as guilty of an act mean, degrading, and disgraceful.'

That review was the beginning of plenty of trouble for Baring-Gould. It was written by a friend of Hawker's, William Maskell, himself a Roman Catholic convert, previously examining chaplain to Bishop Phillpotts of Exeter. He writes later 'We have no ill feeling towards Mr Gould', but one does begin to wonder as he thunders on. He focuses on a story that Baring-Gould tells, of a Morwenstow farmer and his two sons 'whom we will call Henry and Richard Andrews'. Hawker took on Henry's education and arranged for him to go to Oxford. The young man happened to find a manuscript poem by Hawker, copied it out and used it at least in part as an entry for the Newdigate Poetry Prize, which he duly won. Meanwhile Hawker helped Richard to rent a farm, then when the lease ran out tried, unsuccessfully, to have it renewed. This caused father and son to turn against him, and Hawker reacted with some vigour when they publicly opposed his wishes at a vestry meeting:

He rose to his feet, his eyes flashing and extending his right hand, exclaimed with a voice of thunder, "Richard Andrews, with this hand I made you, and now you are the first to lift up your heel against me. I appeal to God against you." And walking to his chancel, he flung himself on his knees before the altar.'

That, as one can easily imagine, did the Andrews family no good. Richard was dead within a week, and his father ten days later. But what really aroused Maskell's indignation was the theft of the poem for the Newdigate Prize, and in the 'Athenaeum' of 8th April 1876 he claimed to have evidence that 'Richard Andrews' had written the whole poem himself. Hawker, who could tell at least as good a story as his biographer, and who had undoubtedly quarrelled with the family, may well have been responsible for the alternative version of the truth.

Meanwhile, Baring-Gould provided the 'Athenaeum' with a very different version of The Andrews story, published perhaps appropriately in the issue of April 1st 1886:

'The persons of whom he (Hawker) told the story, instead of having been so greatly indebted to him, had, on the other hand, done him many favours. They did not die, as he represented, after having been denounced by him, nor at the time he pretends. But this is not all. The worst of the story has yet to be told, as I have just learnt it. The author of the prize poem lent Mr Hawker money and, on one occasion, saved the living from sequestration. Afterwards, in a manner which I cannot bear to relate, he repudiated the debt, and when the fact became known in the neighbourhood, concocted the monstrous story of the prize poem being mainly his own composition to justify (!) his conduct. I need hardly say that, knowing now the facts, names and dates, I shall at once expunge the story from my Memoir. I much regret that I gave it credence '

Well yes, Maskell comments, 'If Mr Baring-Gould can prove the truth of his new account of the transaction, we would suggest that he should suppress, not merely a single page, but the whole of his Memoir. Who would care to read about a man who could be guilty of such baseness?'

Mrs Hawker, the widow, now joined in the fray. She was Hawker's second wife, Pauline, whom he had married in 1864: forty years younger than he, Charlotte had been 21 years older, and the two marriages appear to have been equally happy. Pauline was understandably bruised, first by the fact that Baring-Gould had published his book 'without the least reference to myself, or the slightest regard to any feeling or wish that I might have, or how much additional sorrow it might cause me'; secondly because 'my knowledge of my husband's character alone enables me to utterly deny that he would ever repudiate a debt, and then concoct a monstrous story to justify his conduct'. Such intense unpleasantness was brought to a temporary halt by Baring- Gould's announcement that 'my Memoir is undergoing revision, and till this revision is made, its circulation is stopped'.

Before we look at the 'New and Revised Edition of June 1876, another strand of the story needs to be briefly taken up: Hawker's conversion on his deathbed to Roman Catholicism, which caused such a stir at the time. The original review of 25th March had quoted evidence that Hawker had been 'a Roman Catholic at heart' for many years before his death. Baring-Gould wrote on 1st April, 'Had I seen the letters quoted in the 'Athenaeum', I would never have written my Memoir'. So he provided himself with one reason for not persevering with its further publication: the apparent ambivalence of his subject's commitment to the Established Church. Maskell had offered two more, the alleged repudiation of a debt, and the tale of the 'expedient'.

However, persevere he did. The new edition contained by my count sixteen changes of any significance, none of them fundamental. I will comment on just some of them. The first two, early in the book, comprise 'so runs the tale' and 'if indeed we may trust the story'. attached to unlikely anecdotes, but he appears soon to have tired of that. Later, he omits Hawker's account of his taking a shipwrecked man to stay in his own house, accusing him of 'poetic licence with the facts', which is pretty rich. He does indeed omit any reference to the Andrews family, substituting a relatively gentle tale of Hawker's destruction with an axe of a family pew in the church before its owner's eyes. A small insertion, just three words, embroiders the statement that alter his second marriage he gave up opium: 'He for a time gave up Opium-eating'. He omits an instruction from Hawker to 'his faithful friend and churchwarden' that he was to be buried in Morwenstow church beside his first wife, the friend having announced that 'there is no truth whatever in this statement'. In his account of Hawker's second marriage, he omits a tangential account of Poland's commitment to Roman Catholicism, which had presumably been designed to have bearing on his widow's alleged responsibility for the deathbed conversion. He replaces it with a tasteless tale in the context, about a Bodmin Moor farmer who salted down the body of his first wife in the winter with a view to burying her when the snow had gone, and meanwhile married again. He concludes, "So you see", Mr Hawker would say, when telling the story, "in Cornwall we do things differently from elsewhere. It is on record that the second wife is wed before the first wife is buried." One is left wondering, first, whose story it actually was, and secondly, what Pauline Hawker had done to deserve such treatment: set up the deathbed conversion presumably. He did in fact leave intact from the first edition the moving sentiment, 'Not one ungenerous or unkind word would I say to wound a widow's sacred feelings'.

I am afraid that no one emerges well from this remarkable . story: least of all the man whom the SBGAS exists to commemorate. May I suggest however that it has its derivation from two sources, first the concern about Hawker's conversion to Rome which seems so disproportionate a hundred and twenty years later, and secondly, his biographer's love of a good story, with perhaps scant regard for the truth of it. This, as I have already hinted, was something he shared with Hawker.

At the beginning of this article I implied that the two men scarcely knew one another. Baring-Gould does however quote a letter which he received in 1874 from London, during one of Robert and Pauline Hawker's rare absences from Morwenstow. After discussing how he might be helped to raise funds for his church, Hawker concludes:

'At all events do write. I seem nearer to you here than at home. If you come up, do find us out. I write in haste. Yours faithfully, R.S.Hawker.

He was not the only one to write in haste. But let me end on a warmer note. What a pity that Baring- Gould never did 'find us out'. They would surely have got on very well, and most important, they would have come to know one another better.

Patrick Hutton