

NEWSHEET



NUMBER TWENTY

OCTOBER 1982

ROMSEY

AND DISTRICT SOCIETY

The fourth season of poetry readings in King John's House will start in October 1982. It is perhaps a suitable moment to look back on the development of these readings which were a new venture in 1979, and have become a regular feature in the Society's annual programme of events, and part of the local scene.

We began in October 1979 with some hesitation and trepidation, aware that poetry is classified as a minority interest, and quite unable to predict response in Romsey. Our first evening produced a full house, a team of excellent readers, including David Price MP, and a programme based on a theme which has inspired poets from the beginning of time - love. We were delighted to see such a large audience and the audience must have been gratified and entertained because many have kept coming back for more.

During the past three years there have been 13 readings all given by local residents who have brought enthusiasm and talent to these occasions, as well as a catholicity of taste in poetry. Young people from local schools (Mountbatten, La Sagesse and Romsey) have taken part in every reading and contributed vitality and freshness of outlook which have enhanced these evenings. Their participation and choice of poems have emphasised that poetry is very much a living and thriving art.



Readings have been based on a programme which allows a completely free choice of poems and subjects in the first half of the evening, followed by a set theme in the second half. This large element of choice has resulted in a great variety of poetry, from Shakespeare to Sylvia Plath, and intellectual poems of T.S. Eliot to the humour of Ogden Nash, and a wealth of styles and poets from the 16th to the 20th centuries. The most frequently read poet - top of the poetical pops - is, appropriately in Wessex, Thomas Hardy, who wrote so beautifully about his beloved countryside which is part of our own environment.

The hall mark of these most pleasing evenings has been variety, ensuring something for all tastes and widening poetical horizons. To retain this lively quality we have introduced a change in to the forthcoming programme; instead of a set theme in the second half, poems will be chosen from a particular literary period, starting with the Victorians. It will be most interesting to see what our readers select.

The readers are the essence of the success and popularity of these evenings, and we would be glad to welcome more of them, particularly men. The qualifying age group is from 18 - 100 and within that broad category there must surely be a few more people who would enjoy reading poetry of their choice which we would enjoy hearing. Thanks must be given to the co-organizers of the programme - Dorothy Bennett and Isabel Butler - and also to Diane and Don Hazgreaves for their administrative support and the regular provision of coffee during the intervals.

One of our greatest poets, Shelley, said, 'Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world', and we look forward to another season of pleasant evenings when this beauty will be revealed.

Suzanne Mollo

The editor would like to bring to readers' attention that signed articles in the Newsheet generally reflect the opinions of an individual, whilst unsigned articles are generally the opinion of the Society and Committee
C. A. McCormick

I would like to thank Rod Hoyle, Sylvia Robinson and Val Grace for being so helpful in producing the Newsheet.

Editor

CHRISTMAS CARDS !

THE SOCIETY'S CHRISTMAS CARD THIS YEAR IS ILLUSTRATED WITH A FULL COLOUR PHOTOGRAPH OF ROMSEY ABBEY IN THE SNOW. IT IS A BEAUTIFUL COLOUR PRINT, CAPTURING THE MAGIC AND TIME-LESSNESS OF THE ABBEY IN WINTER, AND WOULD BE APPRECIATED BY BOTH ROMSONIONS AND THOSE WHO DID NOT KNOW THE TOWN.

THE CARDS ARE ON SALE AT 15 PENCE EACH AND ARE AVAILABLE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND IN THE ENTRANCE TO THE TOWN HALL EVERY SATURDAY MORNING FROM 10.30 - 12.30.

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THERE CAN BE FEW PEOPLE WHO ARE IGNORANT OF THE FACT THAT 1981 WAS THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF DISABLED PEOPLE. THE ROMSEY AND DISTRICT SOCIETY ITSELF FORMED A SUB-COMMITTEE AND PRODUCED A SPECIAL NEWSHEET TO COMMEMORATE THE YEAR, WITH A FOREWORD WRITTEN BY LADY ROSEMARY PRICE, PATRON OF THE I.Y.D.P. SUB-COMMITTEE. IN THIS ARTICLE, LADY PRICE QUOTED THE FOUR AIMS OF THE I.Y.D.P. SET OUT BY THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER. THESE AIMS INCLUDED.

1. INCREASING AWARENESS OF THE NEEDS, ABILITIES AND ASPIRATIONS OF DISABLED PEOPLE.
2. THE PARTICIPATION, EQUALITY AND INTEGRATION OF DISABLED PEOPLE.
3. THE PREVENTION OF DISABILITY.
4. THE MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS DISABLED PEOPLE.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT IN 1981 THE DISABLED BECAME FAR LESS A 'GROUP APART FROM SOCIETY' THAN EVER BEFORE, BUT HAS THIS CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO INTEGRATE THE DISABLED CONTINUED INTO 1982?

In Britain there are 5 million citizens who are disabled by physical, mental, or sensory impairments; one in ten of us. However, of these 5 million, there are 1½ million who are severely disabled.

To those of us lucky enough to be sound and strong, it is almost beyond our capabilities to imagine being confined to a wheelchair but, to a very large percentage of that 1½ million, being in a wheelchair has had to become a way of life.



However, as the International Year of Disabled People showed, disabled people are as capable of leading just as full, interesting, and successful lives as able-bodied people, provided that society - which the able-bodied dominate - allows them.

Restrictions can be even more irksome if the wheelchair is itself limited and confined by physical obstructions.

Walking down some of our town's pavements, it is hard to imagine how an electric chair, or a wheel chair, can comfortably negotiate the stretches of broken paving stones and the narrow pavements along which two people cannot

Mrs G. Lehmkuhl of Homehead House lives all day in a wheelchair and has identified the following particular problems in the Town Centre.

1. At the top end of Middlebridge Street.
2. Via the Newton Lane car park to Abbey Water.
3. At the lower end of Bell Street, opposite Duke's Mill.
4. At the top end of Bell Street, outside the Town Hall.

In all these areas, the paving stones are extremely broken and make riding in a wheelchair intolerably uncomfortable. All along Bell Street the pavement is too narrow for a wheel chair, as is the Cornmarket past Lloyd's bank, and past the Midland bank on the other side of the square.

Thus, going out at all is a real challenge, and shopping independently virtually impossible. I.Y.D.P. year was a great success, but there are still glaring gaps, even in our own town.

Surely, if money can be found for re-paving much of the town centre and for elaborate and costly 'pay and display' parking schemes, then we must also be able to look at the essential needs of the disabled as a matter of priority. Perhaps too, our Town Planners and Highways Engineers should spend a day in a wheelchair?

Camilla McCormick



Last winter, the trees sub-committee had already planned the planting of a number of ultimately large trees at various identified sites around the town. At that time, still feeling our way, we were wondering how we were to finance it, and obtain the necessary planning permission.

At last, a spring and a summer later, we are delighted to say that having put the plan to the County Arboricultural Officer in Winchester he agreed, after looking very carefully at each site, to incorporate it into the County tree-planting programme for this winter. The individual sites and species were changed in one or two instances but, by and large, we were pleased with the outcome. The trees are mainly in the Whitenap, Botley Road and Cupernham areas, with a few by the Railway Station and Mountbatten Avenue.

Having been successful, and accordingly learnt much, in our first venture, we are now ready to address ourselves to the question of hedgerow trees, and this is to be our next project.

Dr. J. Wattie, Trees sub-committee.

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EDUCATION...

THE FIRST PROGRAMME OF THE NEW ROMSEY BRANCH OF THE WORKERS' EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (W.E.A.) STARTED THIS AUTUMN. COURSES OFFERED INCLUDE 'RUNNING ROMSEY', 'A LAYMAN'S GUIDE TO COMPUTERS' AND 'ANTIQUES'.

The W.E.A. is a non-political, non-sectarian adult education organisation run mainly by volunteers with a handful of dedicated staff and a panel of well qualified tutors.

The Romsey branch's main aim this autumn is to provide day time classes for those who find it difficult to attend evening classes. Two of the courses offer creche facilities and fit in with the school day. The invitation to study is open to adults of all ages.

'Running Romsey' is a six week course for those who want to find out more about how the town works. Speakers include: County Councillor Mrs Rowsell, Education Officer, Mr John Slade, David Johnson, ex-Mayor of Romsey, Housing Officer Mr Wareing, Chief Inspector Peter Kemp and Planning Officer Mr Pybus.

For parents who would like to understand their child's computer science homework or anyone who feels that they really should know more about modern technology, another six week course, 'A layman's guide to computers' is offered. The tutor is Mr R. Verral from Southampton University.

The popular twenty week course on 'Antiques' is being offered again. The tutor is Commander Maskell.

Interest has already been expressed for courses on music and literature. It is hoped that a music appreciation course linked to the Music in Romsey programme can be organised for early in 1983.

If anyone would like to help plan for future courses, please ring the Hon. Secretary, Elizabeth Robertson, Romsey 514752

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DIARYEVENTS

Fri. 29th 'Jack of Newbury' by David Butler (farmer and broadcaster. 'Jack' was one of the most successful wool merchants of the 16th century, and is reputed to have been one of the first millionaires.

8p.m. King John's Hse.

NOVEMBER

Sat. 6th Guided tour of Winchester by members of the Winchester Preservation Trust. Assembly point: corner of Winchester Cathedral, at 10 a.m.

Wed. 17th 'Window on the Forest', illustrated talk by Robin Fletcher, conservationist and photographer.

8p.m. Abbey Hall

Sat. 21st Walk from Dunbridge.
11 a.m. and 1.30 p.m.

Mon. 29th 'A Normandy Beachhead by Way of Romsey'. A personal, illustrated recollection by David Tanner.

8 p.m. King John's Hse

DECEMBER

Fri. 3rd Poetry for Pleasure, 'An evening of Christmas Poetry'.

8p.m. King John's Hse.

INTO THE 1990s

THE UP-DATED VERSION OF THE SOUTH HAMPSHIRE STRUCTURE PLAN WAS RELEASED TO AN EXPECTANT POPULACE ON 3rd SEPTEMBER AS A DRAFT CONSULTATIVE REPORT. IT IS A TECHNICAL DOCUMENT WHICH MANY OF THE SOCIETY'S MEMBERS MAY BE DETERRED FROM STUDYING. IT IS SURELY SAFE TO CLAIM THAT FEW OF THE POPULATION AFFECTED BY ITS POLICIES WILL EVER KNOW WHAT IT CONTAINS.

The next public meeting of the Society, to be held at 8.0 p.m. in the Abbey Hall on 20th October, is intended to dispel the fog of apathy and ignorance in which we are all surrounded, and to explain in clear terms exactly what the Structure Plan is all about.

It may be helpful to fill in some of the background. The current Structure Plan for South Hampshire, started in 1970, was published in 1977 and covered a 21 year period from inception - establishing the planning strategy to 1991. But conditions change and plans have to be adjusted to meet differences already evident between prediction and actuality. So the County Council trims its sails accordingly and produces what is called a roll-forward version of the Plan. In its revised form it will define an over-all planning policy from now to 1996. Within this framework the Districts then provide their own plans. As you know, the Test Valley is busy working on the Romsey Area Plan which includes the outer limits of the town and the parishes immediately adjoining. The proposals of the Area Plan will reflect the policy of the revised Structure Plan - or vice versa.

The County Planning Officer is anxious to have our views and says in the Preface to the Plan,

"This is an opportunity for the public to take part in making decisions about the broad framework for future development in South Hampshire."

The County will be providing much of the material for our meeting - there will be a slide presentation about the Plan and this will be followed by a more detailed description by one of the Planning Officers present. Thereafter, he and his colleagues will be available to answer questions in a general exchange.

Although the date officially given for the submission of comments is 15th October 1982, we are assured that our meeting is not missing the boat and that the points we make at the meeting and any written comments prompted by that discussion will be considered with the rest.

SO WE DO URGE YOU TO ATTEND ON 20th OCTOBER IN ORDER THAT THIS SOCIETY'S INTEREST IN PLANNING CAN BE SEEN TO BE GENUINE AND OUR VIEWS CARRY PROPER WEIGHT.

Don Hargreaves, Planning sub-committee.

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Volunteers have tackled with enthusiasm the 'Mile of Footpath' scheme introduced earlier in the year. The job involves cutting down brambles and other obstacles, checking signposts and reporting any heavier work that needs doing. There are still several other footpaths to be covered, and if there is anyone keen to join in, please 'phone me - 516040.

During the last few months several guided walks have been held. In the spring, Ron Genge led a Baddesley Common circular ramble and this was followed in May by an exploration of the area west of Pepper Box Hill, led by David and Helen Payne. Hampshire County Council Recreation Department introduced a series of guided walks throughout the summer and a local one was held early in September when Ron Genge took a party of over twenty people along the footpaths surrounding Braishfield. Myrtle Chapman led a walk in the Broadlands area on September 19th.

Giannini Autumn Fashion Show

This Autumn our Fashion Show is in aid of the Arthritis and Rheumatism Council. An organisation which does much necessary and un-publicised work in connection with this very painful and crippling disease, that effects children as well as the aged.

The Fashion Show is being held at Southampton Medical School in the Bolderwood Lecture Theatre, on Wednesday the 20th October at 7.30 p.m. Tickets are from the A.R. Council or Giannini and cost £2.50.

Since winter walking can be every bit as enjoyable as in the summer, a programme of guided walks has been planned for the winter. These will be advertised nearer the time, but they include a day in the Dunbridge area on 21st November and in the spring of 1983 a walk near Michelmersh.

'ROUNDAABOUT ROMSEY', the Footpath Committee's book of walks launched in March has been selling well and newcomers and others interested in exploring our surrounding countryside are invited to buy both this and 'ROMSEY DISTRICT RAMBLES', on sale at local bookshops and newsagents.

Finally, a course on the 'Fascination of maps' has been arranged for November. This is the third such course - an informal discussion on maps and compass work, led by Ron Genge. For further details 'phone 513057.

Sue Kirk, Footpath Secretary

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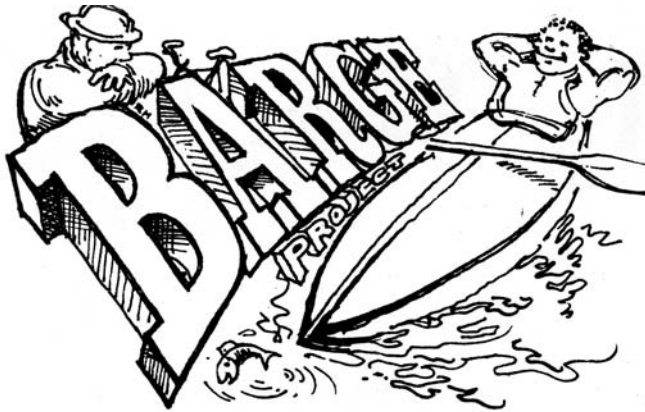
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At last the long awaited opening of the Barge River Project took place in July this year, bringing a little closer some of the objectives that were formulated over five years ago. The opening ceremony was performed by the Romsey town Mayor, Councillor Mrs Pam Gale together with Councillor Mrs Joan Rowsell, with members of the Society, Press and local people in attendance. Mrs Rowsell has been a supporter of the 'Project' for some time and extended her interest by 'having a go' in one of the three canoes which were used to demonstrate the new amenity. Fortunately, we were able to return Joan to the safety of dry land in the hope that both she and Pam Gale will continue to give their support to further activities of this nature which we see as an essential recreational outlet for the young people of the town.

One benefit which this facility has already given is that of a training water for Steve Geary who, though blinded by recent illness, was determined to canoe along the Thames to London in aid of charity and used Barge River in practice for this event.

Steve Medley was mentioned in the last Newsheet and his activities have been greatly valued in maintaining the waterway. It is hoped that the example of both of these young men will stimulate others to join in with us and make the project a success. More, however, needs to be done to complete the project; the car park has to be finished, and the Trees sub-committee have some arboreal work to do when the season permits. An outstanding requirement is the provision of two more seats so that those wishing to enjoy the beauty of the canal walk can find a place of rest along the way. These are, of course, expensive items, and maybe someone may wish to endow one to the Society, or if the two senior schools in Romsey would be interested in constructing them, the cost of the materials would be met by the Society.

Alas, as with many other projects of this kind, there is already some evidence of vandalism to the notices which we have erected. It is a sad reflection on our community, when the efforts of so many are capable of being ruined by so few, but, in spite of this, we shall continue to try and turn our dreams into reality.

David Young, Waterways sub-committee

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