THE SABINE BARING-GOULD APPRECIATION SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 33

2000
AIMS OF THE SOCIETY
To enable those interested in the man and his work to share their enthusiasm and spread the interest among others. This is to be achieved by means of three Newsletters per annum (October, February and June), a membership list and an Annual Gathering at venues with some association with Sabine Baring-Gould.
A Bibliography is available from the Hon. Secretary.

The annual subscription is £6.00. Members joining during the year will receive back copies of the Newsletter for the current year, which is deemed to start with the October issue, when subscriptions are due.

THE COMMITTEE
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• Sabine Baring-Gould was born on 28th January 1834 in Exeter and died on 2nd January 1924 at Lewtrenchard
• He was a hugely influential collector of folksongs at a time when such songs were being rapidly forgotten.
• Folklorist. Magpie collector of anecdotes, practices, beliefs.
• Archaeologist. Pioneer of over 60 excavations on Dartmoor.
• Loved and respected pastor to a widespread Devonshire community
• Reconstructor of buildings - he made enormous changes to both house and church at Lewtrenchard
• As well as ‘Onward Christian Soldiers’ he wrote other perennial hymns - ‘Now the Day is Over’ and ‘Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow’ for example.

Very many thanks to all of you who have sent messages of approval and encouragement following on the last Newsletter. Thank you, too, for the many contributions to these pages. There is certainly no shortage of material this time, and there are more original and interesting articles in the pipeline for October.

The Horbury meeting will be taking place within a few days of your reading this. Fingers crossed for good weather and an enthusiastic turnout.
Although it seems a long way off, we have tried give a reasonably complete programme for the AGM weekend in October in this issue. Further attractions might well be added nearer the time - so please make a large note in your diaries now, 21-22 October, in Lewdown and Lewtrenchard.

Membership continues to grow, and after a flurry of reminders sent out to those who’d overlooked their subscription renewals, we have many fewer ‘dropouts’ than originally feared. Please do try to remember to send your subscription each OCTOBER - especially Overseas members.
£6.00 or $10.00, payable SBGAS, and sent to the Treasurer.

Thanks to the kind assistance of Philip Weller, there is every prospect of at least one imminent new reissue of a Baring-Gould novel by Praxis Books. Guavas the Timmer is one of the shorter novels, set on Dartmoor, and another exciting read. Despite rumours to the contrary, Praxis has definitely not given up on reissuing B-G’s novels.

Finally, I would direct you to the centrepiece of this issue - Philip Weller’s fascinating description of the connections that exist between SBG and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Having seen Laurie King’s The Moor, this might not be completely new to us, but there is a wealth of detail here which I for one found highly illuminating.

Becky Smith
Forthcoming Events

10th and 11th June. The Horbury Baring-Gould March is on the afternoon of Sunday 11th. The March will be prior to and around a full blown reproduction of the Whitsuntide Walk which first featured Sabine’s Onward Christian Soldiers in 1865. The event will be led by the Bishop of Wakefield and the programme is well advanced.

There will be an opportunity for members to attend services at Horbury Brigg Church, see the Mission that Sabine built and walk/ride the route the children took to St Peter’s Church Horbury etc. It is hoped that there will also be some folk-music input with a Devon flavour.

Full information can be obtained from Keith Lister (address, etc inside front cover) Also, please let Keith know as soon as possible if you wish to attend.

The AGM will be held at the same time as the Baring-Gould Festival in Lewtrenchard on 20-29 October 2000. Among many other events, the Festival features a community production of BG’s novel Kitty Alone. This promises to be an exciting and enjoyable event. See enclosed leaflet, and additional information on Page 11.

A block of seats for the Saturday performance (October 21st) has been reserved for members of SBGAS.

Speakers: Squadron Leader Philip Weller will give the background to Kitty Alone, which will prepare us for the performance on that same evening.

Keith Lister will talk to us on Sabine Baring-Gould as Artist

David Shacklock will speak on Sabine Baring-Gould as Theologian.

A Committee Meeting will be called on the morning of Saturday 20th. Would all Committee Members please make themselves available. Time and venue will be notified closer to the date.

It may also interest Members to know that there is a well-established annual Michaelmas Walk, generally on the last Saturday in September, around the Lewtrenchard estate, including pauses for appropriate songs, nature games for children, a tea, and dramatic sketches illustrating events from SBG’s life. This is a truly impressive and exciting development, involving many local people. It is a gratifying illustration of the way in which SBG has been ‘rediscovered’ in the area in recent times, and seems set to expand and develop in the coming years.

Things to Buy

- Tapes and CDs produced by the Wren Trust. The latest is Dead Maid’s Land, a comprehensive and toe-tapping collection of folksongs, all from the Baring-Gould Collection. Tapes are £7.00 and CDs are £13. Available from The Wren Trust, 1 St James Street, Okehampton, Devon. EX20 1DW
- Back copies of this newsletter Singly or in sets. £1.50 each or £46 for the entire collection, from 1989. Apply to Sqn Ldr Philip Weller, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants PO14 3RU
- Books as listed inside the back cover. Some of the older issues cited could now be out of print. A new addition is Gutter the Tinner, one of SBG’s Dartmoor-based novels. Published in July 2000 by Praxis Books.

THE GREAT SUBSTITUTION SCANDAL
Sabine Baring-Gould and Arthur Conan Doyle
By Squadron Leader Philip Weller

My interest in Sabine Baring-Gould (hereinafter SBG) originated at the beginning of the 1960s, when, as a member of the Royal Air Force Mountain Rescue service, I began teaching survival techniques and leadership skills to military personnel on Dartmoor. This interest in SBG has been extended over subsequent decades as I continued teaching on the Moor, as my interest in its history and archaeology developed, and as I enjoyed my annual Spring pilgrimage to the Moor whereby I walk through every single square kilometre grid of the Moor to renew my acquaintance with it, in addition to organising regular expeditions for others on the Moor. The areas explored by SBG naturally play an important part in these expeditions, particularly in terms of a more recent literary interest which I have developed. In 1989 I formed the International Sherlock Holmes Study Group, which now has over 700 members in more than 40 countries, and we hold monthly full-day or weekend functions at locations associated with Sherlock Holmes or with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (hereinafter ACD), as well as a biennial week-long expedition, usually to continental Europe, in addition to producing two large-format journals, two Newsletters, two Holmesian case-studies and various other specialist monographs each year. To celebrate the internal centenary of ACD’s most famous novel, The Hound of the Baskervilles, we formed a specialist study sub-group entitled ‘The Baskerville Hounds’, which concentrates solely on that work and its associations with Dartmoor, and this group holds weekend meetings on the Moor every quarter, with a five-day meeting over each Easter. From these latter studies I developed a conviction that ACD was influenced, to some extent, by the writings of SBG in the production of The Hound of the Baskervilles, and if there is sufficient interest within the Sabine Baring-Gould Appreciation Society, then this might be the subject of a further article in this
The massive extent of interest in Sherlock Holmes is often not appreciated by those not intimately involved, in that there are over 500 Holmesian societies around the world, the largest being The Sherlock Holmes Club of Japan with over 1500 members. Rather sadly there are only three Conan Doyle societies in the world, with one of these existing as another specialist sub-group of my own Holmesian society, with the Arthur Conan Doyle Study Group. Interest in Holmes is particular strong in the USA, and one of its citizens is well known to all serious Holmesian students (or Sherlockians as they are known in that country). That gentleman bore the name of Baring-Gould, but in this case it was one of the grandsons of Sabine, the late William Stuart Baring-Gould (hereinafter WSBG), son of William Drake Baring-Gould. WSBG was for many years on the staff of *Time* magazine, but he is best remembered in literary circles for producing an extensively annotated edition of the Sherlock Holmes stories, and for developing one of the earliest of the many 'biographies' of Sherlock Holmes. Reference to the biography of a fictional character might seem strange to the uninitiated, but this plays an essential part in what is known as 'The Great Holmesian Game' amongst Holmesians and Sherlockians. In 'Playing the Game', Holmesians accept that Holmes and Watson were real people, and that Watson wrote most of the 60 Sherlock Holmes stories, with ACD being relegated to the rôle of 'The Literary Agent'. Once these premises are accepted 'The Game' is played with deadly earnestness, in attempting to locate all the events of the Sherlock Holmes stories within real history and real geography, and the highest standards of literary and historical methodologies are employed in the process. This can be done relatively easily in most cases, because of the way in which ACD wrote: utilising almost everything he saw and experienced throughout his life in the hundreds of stories which he wrote. Perhaps the best description of the way in which 'The Game' is played is that given by Dorothy L. Sayers, herself a player, who wrote on the technical aspects of 'The Game' and who, like ACD and SBG, also wrote an important book about Dartmoor:

The rule of the game is that it must be played as solemnly as a county cricket match at Lord's: the slightest touch of extravagance or burlesque ruins the atmosphere. The exercise has become a recrea-tion; but those who like their recreation to exert a moral influence may take note how easy it is for an unscrupulous pseudo-scholarship to extract fantastic and misleading conclusions from a literary text by a series of omissions, emendations and distortions of context.

Given the unfamiliarity of most Americans with the game of cricket, it might be expected that many American Sherlockians fail to heed the warnings of Miss Sayers in an appropriate manner, and although WSBG played 'The Game' better than many of his countrymen, he was certainly guilty of extravagance, and he clearly inherited Sabine’s penchant for dramatic invention when the facts were unavailable! Less forgivable, however, is the way in which WSBG misrepresented the real facts of the situation. Even less forgivable is the way in which he does not acknowledge the work of another scholar, in the far more serious real-life world of the biography of SBG.

In 'Playing the Game', the descriptions of Holmes and Watson given in the stories are used to build up their personal biographies. Thus, Watson describes himself on the first page of the first Sherlock Holmes story as having been trained as an Army surgeon at Netley in Hampshire, a real Army hospital located only a few miles away from where ACD wrote the story, and then Watson records that he was wounded at the disastrous Battle of Maiwand of 27 June 1880, whilst attached to the Berkshire Regiment. An enormous amount of research has gone into examining the details of that battle in order to determine the part which Watson could have played in it, and there is the fact that a Surgeon-Major Preston, a member of the Berkshire Regiment, was wounded at Maiwand and subsequently became a member of the staff at Netley hospital. One of the most tantalising of the many biographical problems in the Sherlock Holmes canon is that of the early childhood of Holmes. Very little information is actually given in the texts, but WSBG managed to produce an extensive and detailed account which created a wonderful background for his fellow Sherlockians. For those with knowledge of SBG, however, and it seems that there were none in the Sherlockian world at the time that the book was published, it would have presented an incredible association between WSBG and Sherlock Holmes.

In his biography of Holmes, in discussing Holmes's father, WSBG wrote:

In the early spring of that year, a young cavalry lieutenant in the service of the East India Company - uniform blue and gold - had offered, one evening, to drive a friend home from the company mess. Perhaps the dinner had been an exceptionally good one. Certainly both the cavalry lieutenant and his friend were heavy men, each weighing in the neighbourhood of fourteen stone. In any case, it followed that the dogcart shortly turned over. The friend was unhurt, but the hip of the cavalry lieutenant was dislocated, and he was invalided home without delay.

Students of the life of SBG might well feel that they have read this before, and they would, almost, be correct in that feeling. In his biography of SBG, William Purcell wrote, about SBG's father:

Some fifteen years after Waterloo a cavalry lieutenant in the East India Company's service - uniform blue and gold - decided to drive a friend home from the mess. The dinner may have been a good one; the friend was certainly heavy. It followed that, when the dog-cart was overcast, as it shortly was, and the friend fell upon
his companion, the hip of the cavalry lieutenant was
dislocated. He was invalided home, to become ever afterwards
a country gentleman with a limp, too much time on his hands
and the irascibility of temper which, for a man of spirit, was
likely to develop out of such a situation.

It should, of course, be noted that WSBG produced his biography of Holmes
in 1962, some five years after Purcell’s biography of SBG.

From this one might draw various conclusions. Firstly, if Playing the
Game, it might be suggested that Sherlock Holmes was the secret son of
Edward Baring-Gould, and thus a secret brother of Sabine, were it not that
WSBG dates the accident involving his East India Company lieutenant as
occurring in 1844, rather than in the 1830 of the real-life carriage accident.
Perhaps the only real conclusion which one can draw is that WSBG liked to
think of himself as being the grandson of his hero, Sherlock Holmes. His use
of extracts from the work of William Purcell might, however, give support to
the suggestion that this was an inherited trait, in that one is reminded of the
acccusations of plagiarism raised against SBG, under the title of “Is Baring-
Gould an Imitator?” in the Graphic of 21 June 1899, over material used in
John Herring, as William Purcell himself records.

WSBG was certainly guilty of many other outrageous inventions in his
biography of Holmes, presented as facts and accepted by many Sherlockians
as such, and he was not content with transferring part of the history of the
Baring-Gould family to Sherlock Holmes, though, for he was later to allocate
the Baring-Gould home to one of Sherlock Holmes’s clients. In his
Annotated Sherlock Holmes, in dealing with the case entitled The Hound of
the Baskervilles, he provides an illustration of ‘Baskerville Hall’ which is
actually of Lew House.1 This is in spite of the fact that the Baskerville Hall
of the story is clearly described as being on the South-Eastern edge of
Dartmoor, with the famous Yew Alley of that Hall leading directly onto the
Moor, and with the only clear view of the Moor being from the Western
window of the Hall. At Lew House, which is several miles from the
North-Western edge of the Moor, one would, in looking from the West wing
be looking towards Cornwall.

The author of this article has examined every single large house on
Dartmoor, and in the areas surrounding it, in attempting to determine
whether any of them might have provided some of the inspiration for the
description of ‘Baskerville Hall’. The only two which have any real
relevance are Brooke Manor, in terms of the hound legends associated with it,
and Hayford Hall, in terms of its locational relationship to the other parts of
the Moor described in the book, with both of these being located in the
South-Eastern quadrant of the Moor which ACB describes. The main
inspiration for ‘Baskerville Hall’ is, in fact, Cromer Hall in Norfolk, with
ACB having started the writing of the book in the nearby Royal Links Hotel
in 1901, with that hotel then being owned by the resident lord of the manor at
Cromer Hall. Cromer Hall does have associations with SBG, in that several
members of the Baring banking family lived there, with the famous foreign
diplomat Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer) being born there. It also has direct
associations with SBG and Dartmoor, through the incumbents at the Hall at
the time when ACB visited Cromer being the Bond Cabell family. It will be
recalled that SBG’s grandfather was Admiral Francis Godolphin Bond, and it
might be noted that the incumbent at Brooke Manor, near Buckfastleigh,
about whom there were several hound legends, was one Richard Cabell. SBG
was to record one of these legends in his Little Methuen guide to Devonshire,
(9) and we may have a case here of ACB having influenced SBG, in that there
are elements of this hound legend account which had never previously been
recorded, and which resemble to some extent the invented Dartmoor hound
legend told in The Hound of the Baskervilles. It should be noted that SBG’s
version of the Cabell hound legend was first published in May 1907, whereas
The Hound of the Baskervilles was first published in April 1902.

There are clearly links between ACB and SBG, if not those which WSBG
claimed. One might more usefully, for example, consider SBG to have been
an influence upon the portrayal of the amateur archaeologist, Dr Mortimer,
who carries out excavations on the Moor in The Hound of the Baskervilles in
1899. One possible link between ACB and SBG which the author of this
article has frequently encountered in Devonshire is the suggestion that ACB
visited Lew House, and that he met SBG. An additional piece of information
has often been added to this suggestion, to the effect that there is or was a
visitor’s book at Lew House which includes an entry for ACB. Unfortunately,
whenever those who have made this claim have been asked to provide
evidence for this suggestion, no such evidence has been produced, and our
President, Dr Merriol Almond, has kindly responded to my enquiry on this
subject by saying that she is not aware of any such visitor’s book, or of a
Doylean visit. These rumours may, sadly, all be part of the myth-creation
which goes on around most famous men, for in examining the houses/hotels on
and around Dartmoor this researcher has been told by 27 current owners
that ACB stayed at their house whilst he was writing The Hound of the
Baskervilles! As he only stayed in Devonshire for a very short time, and as we
have evidence to establish that he stayed for several days at the home of a
friend in Ilplepwen who hosted him throughout the stay, and that they stayed
for some days at Rowe’s Duchy Hotel in Princetown to gather local colour
from the Moor, it is difficult to see how or why he fitted in any other
residential visits. ACB was an inveterate name-dropper where the famous
were concerned, especially so with literary figures, and although he mentions
many of those with whom he had shared only a few words, he nowhere
mentions SBG in his various autobiographical writings. We thus have here
another illustration of the great loss we have all suffered over the destruction
of the third volume of SBG’s reminiscences. The hope is still there, however,
that someone, somewhere may have the evidence to establish a
physical link between these two men who so clearly loved Dartmoor, so please note that your help would be much appreciated and well-acknowledged if you are able to assist in solving this particular mystery. As Sherlock Holmes himself might well have said, where ACD, SBG and Dartmoor are concerned:

The Game Is Still Afoot

References & Notes:

Note. As this is my first venturing forth into the rarified realms of Baring-Gouldian scholarship, Dr Merriel Almond and Keith Lister offered some useful comments on the draft, which were gratefully accepted, but the resultant is entirely my own responsibility, and I do apologise in advance for any lapses in Baring-Gouldian etiquette and knowledge. I would certainly welcome criticisms and additions to the topics covered, in the hope that future lapses might be reduced. Correspondence would also be welcomed, at: 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hampshire, PO14 3RU, England, or at e-mail <p.weller@btinternet.com>.

So What's New?

I was recently introduced to John & Joyce Turner who are collectors of musical boxes and members of the Music Box Society of Great Britain. It is now difficult to envisage that such antiquated mechanical instruments were the forerunners of our modern recording industry but in the late 1800s they were in use around the world providing music in homes, churches and at concerts.

During John's research into the history of phonographs he mentioned that it was Edison who recorded the hymn for the first time on a phonograph cylinder and, yes you have guessed it, that hymn was Onward Christian Soldiers!

After I outlined the history of the hymn and the range of tunes written for it John went on to collect the original drums and discs and then located the appropriate musical boxes so they could be played in their original setting. The children of Horbury Bridge Junior & Infants School and Wakefield Metropolitan Brass Band were also invited to produce a contemporary rendition of the hymn. The compilation was finally drawn together with a narrative read by a professional presenter to form a unique historical record of the first hymn played on Victorian mechanical musical instruments.

The copyright has been retained by John who has now kindly donated the work to the National Federation and Regional Education/Welfare Organisation for the blind who are currently distributing it to their worldwide membership.

Although the recording will not be sold on the open market John has kindly agreed that copies can be released to members of SBGAS at a cost of £5 inc. package & postage out of which the sum of £1 will be donated to SBGAS for each copy sold.

The recording will be launched at the Horbury Meet in June and copies of the tape can be obtained there or from my home address shown in the Newsletter cover.

Keith Lister.
Introducing New Members

Three more members of the Baring-Gould clan have become members of the Society. We are pleased to welcome:

Justin Maxwell-Batten. Grandson of Diana Amelia, great-grandson of SBG. Justin manages a country pub in Bickleigh, South Devon, having worked as a photographer and a flight instructor.

Luke Atkinson is probably our youngest member at 15. His mother is Diana Amelia’s grand-daughter. He is at school in Devon, and has an interest in joining the Navy when he leaves school.

Marcus Maxwell-Batten is Justin’s son. He is taking a degree at Plymouth University at the current time.

We also welcome Jennifer Metcalfe, Moira Harris and Albert Price.

Review

In March, The Red Spider Company players included a short ‘shadow play’ of Margery of Quether as part of a varied dramatic programme. The shadow puppets were operated by children from the local primary school, with impressive technical skill. Members of the company spoke the lines in a rich variety of voices. Comic touches abounded, and this original element added greatly to the enjoyment of the evening’s entertainment.

Titbits

“Opportunities are like fleas, to be took smart or away they goes. They be terrible long-legged.” (Mrs Verstage, in The Broom Squire.)

Cedric Baring-Gould

From the New Yorker Magazine, some years ago:

THERE’LL ALWAYS BE AN ENGLAND

Sir - The hymn “Onward Christian Soldiers”, sung to the right tune and in a not-too-brisk tempo, makes a very good egg-time. If you put the egg into boiling water and sing all five verses and chorus, the egg will be just right when you come to Amen.

Mrs G.H.Moore, London NW3.

(Reprinted from the Daily Telegraph, London)

References in Print


Clues: A Journal of Detection. Fall/Winter 1999. Published in Ohio, USA. A long article by David Beams, a SBGAS member, entitled ‘Piratical Priests’. Extensive mention of In the Roar of the Sea, as well as Winefred. A highly interesting article, analysing three novels featuring priests involved in piracy.

The following reference has been supplied by Cedric Baring-Gould

Clear Waters Rising by Nicolas Crane. pp 80-81, refers to Sabine and his Book of the Pyrenees, and tells his story of the Cannibal of Garges.

The Wren Trust Initiative

The enclosed Wren Trust and Red Spider Company leaflets will be required reading for all our members. This Festival is being advertised nationwide (and beyond) and promises to elevate SBG’s public profile significantly. There is something for everyone, and our own AGM will coincide with the second day of this Festival.

Particular attention is drawn to the Baring-Gould Study Day on Wednesday 25th October. Many of us can vouch for the educational value of Jane Marchand’s Dartmoor trips, as well as Martin Graeber’s detailed knowledge of many aspects of SBG’s work. Both are members of SBGAS, and it is hoped that full support can be given to this day - as well as to the whole Festival.
An Old Favourite

SBGAS Member Felicity Craigan has suggested we revisit the following little verse by Charles Causley. Newer members might well not be familiar with it.

The Reverend Sabine Baring-Gould
Rector (sometime) at Lew,
Once at a Christmas party asked,
‘Whose pretty child are you?’

(The Rector’s family was long,
His memory was poor,
And as to who was who, had grown
Increasingly unsure.)

At this, the infant on the stair
Most sorrowfully sighed,
‘Whose pretty little girl am I?
Why, YOURS, papa!’ she cried.

Sad News

It is with sadness that we have to report the death of three of our members. Mr Stanley Taylor and Mr Edward Atkinson both died in 1999, and Mr David Smithers died on Sunday 14th May this year. We send sincere condolences to the families and friends of all three.