



# ONWARD!

The Sabine Baring-Gould Newsletter

Number 2, 7 Feb 2020

Welcome to the second of the newsletters that we will be producing occasionally to keep former members of the Sabine Baring-Gould Appreciation Society informed about things of interest related to 'SB-G'.

## SBGAS

Since the dissolution of the Sabine Baring-Gould Appreciation Society in March last year a number of actions have been taken by the executors (Roger Bristow, and Martin and Shan Graebe). These include:

- All outstanding expenses have been settled.
- The SBGAS website, in its modified form, will be kept going for the time being. It is still attracting new visitors and is a source of queries about SB-G. It has been archived through the British Library. A sum of £180 will be set aside to meet the costs of maintaining the website for (at least) another 5 years.
- The final volume of the 'Transactions' was published.
- A contribution has been made towards a Blue Plaque to mark SB-G's birthplace. (See separate article.)

After deduction of the website costs the residue of £200 will be donated to Plymouth Library to help conserve their collection of Baring-Gould material. The SBGAS bank account will then be closed.

---

'There are depraved appetites among human beings, and only unwholesome-minded individuals can love Dartmoor.'

S. Baring-Gould, *A Book of Dartmoor*, p. 5.

## The Blue Plaque



Over the years there has been a lot of discussion about the exact location of SB-G's birthplace. Dogged work by Hazel Harvey has determined that the correct building is 15, Southernhay East (Formerly Chichester Place), now occupied by the solicitors, Gilbert Stephens.

Exeter Civic Society have now raised the funds to place a blue plaque on the building. SBGAS contributed £300 to this fund. The unveiling of the plaque will take place at 14:00 on Friday 20 March.

After the unveiling there will be an event in Southernhay Church Hall, to include short speeches/presentations on SB-G. A recital of folk songs that he collected will be given by Wren Music. Tea and biscuits will be available in the hall.

If you wish to attend please contact Ian Maxted ([ianmaxted@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ianmaxted@hotmail.co.uk))

## The Holy Well



THE HOLY WELL AT LEW TRENCARD, DEVON.  
In the Box, S. Baring Gould's pencil, surrounded by  
the Cross from Downpatrick.

On a recent visit to Belfast, Shan and I met Stiofan O'Direain who is studying the life of the Irish lawyer, folklorist, and writer, Joseph Bigger, who corresponded with Baring-Gould.

Bigger wrote an obituary for the

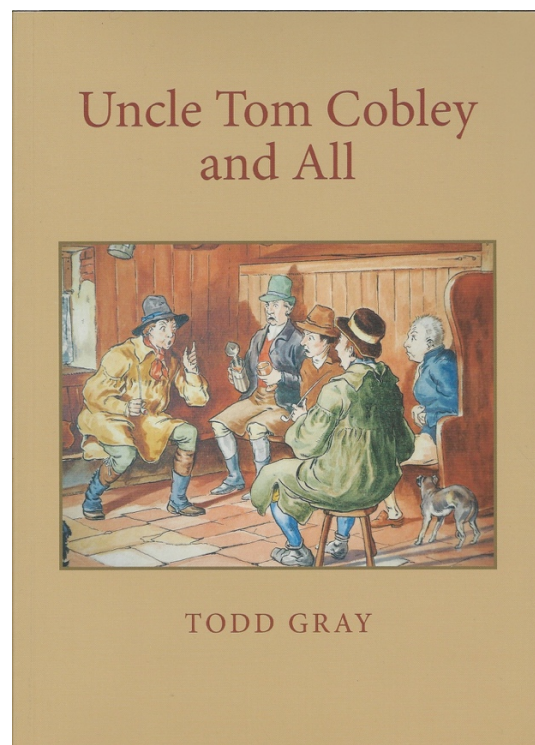
*Belfast News-Letter* (05 January, 1924) in which he described the life of his friend, with a particular emphasis on his studies of the Celtic saints. He also told the story of SB-G's reconstruction of St Petroc's Well at Lewtrenchard and how he enlisted Bigger's help in obtaining an Irish Cross to stand on the well's gable. The cross was carved in County Down, using stone from Downpatrick, where "... the weary feet of Ireland's Patron Saint had so often travelled."



The Holy Well, in its current location in front of Lew House

## Uncle Tom Cobley and All

One of the more intriguing publications of 2019 came from the pen of Todd Gray, who gave us a memorable talk on the woodwork of Lewtrenchard Church at our annual meeting in 2012. Taking a break from his usual fields of work, he has produced an exhaustive study of the song 'Widecombe Fair', looking back at its origins, and at the different guises in which it has appeared over the years – he gives more than 50 examples of variants and parodies.



He concludes that the song's popularity over the last century or so is a result of Baring-Gould publishing it in 1889 in his *Songs of the West*. What is still not clear, however, is where it came from in the first place.

*Uncle Tom Cobley and All* is published by Mint Press, Exeter. Details from here: [http://www.stevensbooks.co.uk/todd\\_gray\\_books/utca.html](http://www.stevensbooks.co.uk/todd_gray_books/utca.html).