



THE
JOHN CLARE SOCIETY
Newsletter

February 2014

No. 120



THE JOHN CLARE SOCIETY

Patrons: Richard Mabey, and the Rt. Revd. Donald Allister, Bishop of Peterborough.

President: Dr Ronald Blythe

Vice-Presidents: Professor Eric Robinson, Edward Storey,
Professor Kelsey Thornton, Rodney Lines,
Peter Moyse, Professor John Goodridge

Chair: Mrs Linda Curry (l.j.curry@bham.ac.uk)

Vice Chair: Revd Ron Ingamells

Hon. Secretary: Miss Sue Holgate

Hon. Treasurer and Membership Secretary: Jim Heppell

Journal Editor: Dr Simon Kövesi

Archivist: Dr Sam Ward

Sales Officer: Mrs Mavis Leverington

Publicity Officer: Mrs Ann Marshall

Newsletter Editor: Dr Valerie Pedlar

Committee Members: Dr Peter Cox, Dr Bob Heyes, Ian Jebbett,
Norman Lee, Mike Hobson.

North American Representative: Professor James McKusick

The John Clare Society Website: <http://johnclaresociety.blogspot.com>

New members are always welcome. Please contact Sue Holgate, 9 The Chase, Ely, Cambs CB6 3DR (01353-668438) or sueholgate@hotmail.co.uk.

The John Clare Society is a UK Registered Charity, number 1124846.

CONTENTS

Page 4	Editorial
Page 6	John Clare Festival, 2014
Page 7	Seamus Heaney and John Clare: 'real imaginative haulage work' - John Goodridge
Page 10	Water Meadows - Mike Sharpe
Page 11	Spring Palette - Jean Pearce
Page 12	Songs of Peace: Francis Ledwidge - Mike Mecham
Page 15	John Clare in Epping Forest - Pete Relph
Page 17	Ronald Blythe, <i>Time by the Sea: Aldeburgh 1955-1958</i> - review by Linda Curry
Page 18	Forthcoming events
Page 20	Amendment to Friends of the festival Festival sales

Editorial

This year marks the 150th anniversary of Clare's death, and various celebrations are being planned. You'll find all the dates under **Forthcoming Events** (pp.18-19).

For the 150th anniversary concert on **17 May** in St John's Church, Peterborough, the John Clare Society has commissioned a new work. The composer is Somtow Sucharitkul who is a novelist, opera composer, and conductor specialising in opera. His song cycle *Songs Before Dawn* was commissioned by the Norwegian government for the 100th Anniversary of the Nobel Peace Prize. According to the London *Opera* magazine: 'In just 5 years, Somtow has made Bangkok into the operatic hub of Southeast Asia'.

The concert will be given by The Fairhaven Singers, a chamber choir who have a growing reputation, in England and abroad. Their conductor is Ralph Woodward, and it was through him that we were fortunate in getting Somtow to write his special work.



The Fairhaven Singers in Poland.

The day after the concert, on **18 May** there will be a special evening service at All Saints' Church, Northampton. This is the church under whose portico Clare was accustomed to sit during those 23 years he spent as a resident in Northampton Asylum. To enter that church on such an occasion as a worshipper (whatever one's religious faith, or lack of it) must surely be both humbling and exciting.

The church has a proud music tradition and has set up a Composition Competition with a prize of £1000, in which composers are invited to set to music for choral singing one of two Clare poems specified in the competition rules. The deadline is **28 February** 2014. Full details can be had from Ron Ingamells (rjinghamells@btinternet.com). The winning entry will be first performed at the Service on 18 May.

The Society has also arranged for a simple wreath-laying ceremony to take place in Poets' Corner Westminster Abbey at 12 noon on the actual date of John Clare's death, **20 May**.

May is going to be a busy month, because Simon Kövesi is organizing a conference to be held at Oxford Brookes University, **30-31 May**. The conference aims to explore the places and spaces of Clare's life and work, and the broad dimensions of his engagement with traditions across literary, rural and folk cultures, investigating the reasons Clare might be increasingly relevant to contemporary culture.

So please have a good look at **Forthcoming Events** for further details about this and the other events that are being organized this year.

Another, more recent death, will have saddened poetry lovers, especially those who are drawn to Clare's poetry. Seamus Heaney is celebrated and his connection with Clare is explored in an article by John Goodridge (pp.7-9), and his shadow falls, too, over a piece by Mike Meham (pp.12-14).



All Saints' Church,
Northampton.

The John Clare Festival 11–13 July 2014

2014 marks the 150th anniversary of Clare's death and the Festival's theme will be 'Clare's Legacy'. We will begin, as always, with the Midsummer cushions at the church on Friday and the results of the children's poetry competition. For anyone who has never been, it is a lovely event – particularly if the sun shines on us!

On the Saturday the school will be open from around 9.00am for book and Society stalls. They will be available all day and the main parking will be up there. As last year, the AGM, the President's talk and the afternoon talk will all be in St. Botolph's church.

There will be the usual excellent lunches and teas at the Village Hall and this year it is important that people remember to buy lunch tickets beforehand. We hope this will lessen the queuing and general scramble for lunches! But you will be reminded of this on the day. There will also be coffee and tea available all morning in Botolph's Barn.

The talk in the afternoon this year is to be given by Professor Arthur Homer from the United States. We are also arranging self-guided village walks and there will be time to browse in Annakin's art gallery and the Cottage. The usual poetry reading in the church will take place at 5.00pm to be followed at 6.00pm by a concert by the Greenwood Quire – an excellent local choir. More about this in the next Newsletter. It is hoped that members may feel able to stay for the concert which will be over by 7.30pm and will be a fitting end to our day.

On Sunday the Revd Ron Ingamells will be preaching on a Clare-related topic at St. Botolph's church to bring the Festival to a close. If you are able to help in any way on the day we would be most grateful.

Please contact the Festival Secretary, Sue Holgate, on 01353 668438 or sueholgate@hotmail.co.uk

Sue Holgate

Seamus Heaney and John Clare: 'real imaginative haulage work'

When I was gathering responses to Clare's bicentenary from the good and the great for the 1993 *John Clare Society Journal* I had some wonderful responses, as some will remember. John Barrell wrote about how reading the 'raw' Clare editions was like seeing a fine old painting restored, while E.P.Thompson celebrated the way this 'great poet' bore witness to how enclosure transformed the 'psychic landscape'. There was a spine-tingling new poem from R.S. Thomas, 'Lunar', and a witty epigram from Gavin Ewart. But the most exciting and enthusiastic response came from Seamus Heaney, whose death last August was widely lamented. He wrote:

Clare inspires one to trust that poetry can break through the glissando of post-modernism and get stuck in the mud of real imaginative haulage work. He never heard of Mandelstam's famous phrase about Acmeism being a 'nostalgia for world culture', but oddly enough, it makes sense to think of Clare in relation to the arrival of poetry in that longed for place or state. The dream of a world culture, after all, is a dream of a world where no language will be relegated ... Clare's poetry underwrites a vision like this, where one will never have to think twice about the cultural and linguistic expression of one's world on its own terms since nobody else's terms will be received as normative and official. To read him for the exotic flavours of an archaic diction and the picturesque vistas of a bucolic past is to miss the trust he instills in the possibility of a self-respecting future for all languages, an immense, creative volubility where human existence comes to life and has life more abundantly because it is now expressed in its own self-gratifying and unhindered words.

It is rousing stuff, celebrating Clare as the trumpet of a prophecy, showing the way forward to a levelled, egalitarian, postcolonial literary landscape. In his related essay, 'John Clare's Prog', Heaney quotes with approval Hugh MacDiarmid's regret that English Literature has been based on a 'narrow ascendancy tradition', rather than a broad-based celebration of the varied riches of our island's linguistic and verse cultures. Heaney felt that Clare importantly offers resistance to this narrowness: by 'propping' rather than prodding or poking the mouse's nest in his sonnet, and in the numerous other ways through which the earlier poet insisted on the value of the local and the regional in his poetry.



Seamus Heaney at the University College Dublin, February 11, 2009.

John Clare and Seamus Heaney have much in common. I don't just mean by this that they were both 'country poets'. Dennis O'Donoghue's wonderful book of interviews with Heaney, *Stepping Stones*, has a wry anecdote from Heaney about how he was slyly rebuked by Patrick Kavanagh for bracketing Kavanagh with Thomas Hardy in just such a reductive way. What I mean is that they have many important features in common, as poets and as human beings. I can only briefly sketch a few of the things that connect them here. There is, firstly, a pleasure principle in their poetry, a sense of a physical enjoyment of the natural world, and a love of water, wood and stone. Both leavened their instinctive sensitivity with humour. Heaney talks to O'Donoghue about the 'merry man' within himself, and Clare loves to let his humour run free in poems like 'The Cellar Door', and in things like his prose descriptions of Lamb and Hazlitt, or of the London couple 'lavishing praises on the beautiful song of the nightingale'—'which happened to be a thrush'. While both poets were valued as warmly sociable men, they share a strong sense of solitude. Clare writes repeatedly of childhood wanderings when he happily 'stole' away from his unseeing companions, while Heaney tells O'Donoghue, 'I remember much of my childhood as a trance of loneliness, and in those places something in me was utterly at peace'.

There is a dramatic sense of the fearful in both poets. Nature can inspire panic. Clare's speaker takes fright in 'The Mouses Nest' (as Clare himself does, in his prose, when he encounters an angry fox

and her cubs), and so does Heaney's speaker in poems like 'The Barn' and 'Death of a Naturalist'. Both poets, though, derived their strong rootedness and sense of self from stable and nurturing childhood experiences. Heaney described in his Nobel speech the 'intimate, physical, creaturely existence' of his family childhood. Clare recollects equally intimate and nurturing experiences in his autobiographical writings, and poems like 'To my Cottage'. Both poets experienced early loss in the death of a sibling: see Heaney's 'Mid-Term Break' or Clare's 'To an Infant sister in Heaven'. And both encountered a great challenging disruption to their lives in a dramatic external event: for Clare, the Enclosures; for Heaney, the Troubles. Many of their best poems respond to these powerful changes and their attendant dislocations, such as finding oneself under frightening scrutiny (be it from gamekeepers or border guards)—see Clare's sonnet 'Trespass' ('I dreaded walking where there was no path'), or Heaney's poem 'From the Frontier of Writing', where 'everything is pure interrogation'.

As well as writing about Clare, Seamus Heaney helped Geoffrey Summerfield in his later work on the poet, and attached his name to my multi-authored letter to the *Times Literary Supplement* about Clare's copyright in 2000. When I invited him over to Nottingham to 'launch' the John Clare Lecture Theatre at Nottingham Trent University in 2002, he was genuinely regretful that he couldn't make it, and reminded me, 'You know I am well disposed to Clare-work', adding in a characteristic postscript, 'Blessings on the work'. Like another important regional literary figure we lost last year, Ray Gosling, Heaney felt a personal attachment to Clare (Gosling's stemmed from his Northamptonshire childhood: see his autobiography, *Personal Copy*). Heaney's poetry, as much as his prose criticism, reveals his attachment to Clare in myriad ways. It is the rich legacy of a great Clarean as well as a great poet.

John Goodridge

From Seamus Heaney, 'Death of a Naturalist'

Then one hot day when fields were rank
With cowdung in the grass the angry frogs
Invaded the flax-dam; I ducked through hedges
To a coarse croaking that I had not heard
Before. The air was thick with a bass chorus.
Right down the dam gross-bellied frogs were cocked
On sods; their loose necks pulsed like sails. Some hopped:
The slap and plop were obscene threats. Some sat
Poised like mud grenades, their blunt heads farting.
I sickened, turned, and ran. The great slime kings
Were gathered there for vengeance and I knew
That if I dipped my hand the spawn would clutch it.

Water Meadows

Heavy rain has left
These fields in shock.
Hungry gulls tread water,
splash through sky and under-water clouds,
bewildered that their feeding grounds
are sea.

Something untoward ripples
in this upside-down of things,
a fluttering disquiet
that earth succumbs so readily
to change.
But they get used to it,
Probing deep for worms
as succulent as fish.

Mike Sharpe



Flooded fields, December 2013.

Spring Palette

There is a smell of honey in the air
Land fragrant in sunshine, blowing fair
With golden rape fertile in every field
Which later, in shiny bottles yield
Their yearly pollinated crop by bees
Nature and man together work to please.
While new born lambs leaping in boundless joy
Need farm hands strong for the lands employ
Contented cattle munch the milky grass
As calmer rivers flow and gently pass
The Beech trees carpeted and ringed with blue,
Nodding bluebells with their hazy hue
Horse Chestnuts with new candelabra spring
Proudly erect, yearly their lights bring.
While down beneath, lowly Dandelion clocks
Call Time from earlier yellow locks
Looking like moon-balls with each seeded head
Puffballs for children and winds to shed.

Jean Pearce



Samuel Palmer, *Girl Standing* (overlooking a rural scene) (1826).

Songs of Peace: Francis Ledwidge

But sorrow and silence
Are the wood's threnody,
The silence for you
And the sorrow for me.

These four lines conclude a short poem by the Irish poet Francis Ledwidge; an elegy for his dead love Ellie Vaughney. With echoes of Clare's Mary Joyce, their love had fallen victim of the Irish rural class system which was based on property. Francis was a lowly labourer with no assets while she was the daughter of a Slane landowner. Her shattering words at their final meeting were to spawn a flurry of poems from a distraught poet, including 'Before The Tears', 'The Death of Love' and 'A Memory'. Some have indeed suggested that it was this lost love that led Ledwidge to enlist in 1914.

While Ledwidge's biographer, Alice Curtayne, dismissed comparisons with John Clare there are many to be found, not least the enduring loss of a first love in similar circumstances. Both poets rejoiced in their home 'place' and natural environment; both had aristocratic patrons and today have a dedicated following and cottage museums in their places of birth. And both were also to die, to use Clare's description, in their own 'Bastilles', Clare in Northampton Asylum and Ledwidge on the bloody fields of Flanders.

Francis ('Frank') Edward Ledwidge was born in Slane, County Meath on 19 August 1887, the eighth of nine children in a poor farming family. His parents believed in education for their children, but after the premature death of his father, Francis left school at 13 and thereafter educated himself, remaining inspired by his schoolmaster Thomas Madden who described Ledwidge as an 'erratic genius'. He worked variously as farm hand, road mender and supervisor of roads, as copper miner and shop assistant. He was also a political radical; a trade union activist, Irish nationalist and member of the Irish Volunteers. Yet, like thousands of his countrymen, he chose to join the British Army to fight in the First World War. 'I would not have Britain say that she defended Ireland while all we did was pass resolutions', he said.

Ledwidge was wounded at Gallipoli but a deeper wound was inflicted in 1916 by the Easter uprising in Ireland when his friend and fellow poet Thomas McDonough was executed as one of its leaders. He was to lament that he was now a British soldier 'while my country has no place in nations'. He would also write one of his most enduring poems, 'Lament for Thomas McDonough':

He shall not hear the bittern cry
In the wild sky where he is lain,
Nor voices of the sweeter birds
Above the wailing of the rain.

But Ledwidge never left the British army or the fields of Flanders for he was to die at the Battle of Passchedale on 31 July 1917. A memorial now stands near where he was killed, while Belgium friends built a replica in the garden of the Ledwidge museum.



The Ledwidge Museum, Slane.

My annual two week Irish cycle tour in 2013 took me to Slane and the Ledwidge Museum. The town looks down onto the Boyne River valley, described by some as the cradle of Irish civilisation. It has also been called the 'Valley of the Kings' and along its banks will be found the significant Neolithic monuments of Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth. It also encompasses the Hill of Tara and the Hill of Slane itself, both of which are major sites in Celtic mythology. Ledwidge's small body of work draws on these ancient roots as well as its woods, fields and habitat.

The small town of Slane is now at the intersection of two main roads, one to Derry and the other to Drogheda. The Ledwidge museum is to be found a kilometre or so up the hill along the Drogheda road and is manned seven days a week and funded entirely by volunteers and friends. On such a road it remains a haven of peace and of the

endurance of poetry. I arranged a meeting with the Ledwidge committee at which we each spoke about our respective poets and I read some of Clare's poetry. We exchanged gifts, mine including a copy of Peter Moyse's *John Clare: The Poet and the Place*. Theirs included an evocative CD by Seán Tyrrell setting some of Ledwidge's poems to music, *Songs of Peace*, in a similar way that his namesake Gordon Tyrrell has done to Clare in *A Distance from the Town*.

Although comparing Ledwidge to Clare may seem fanciful, there was an atmosphere in the cottage that kept drawing me to Clare as well. It was also remarkable that one caller during my visit had come over from near High Beech in Essex and was familiar with Clare. Both poets were also admired by the late Seamus Heaney and on the wall of the cottage in Slane is a manuscript of Heaney's poem 'In Memoriam Francis Ledwidge – Killed in France 31 May 1917':

In you, our dead enigma, all the strains
Criss-cross in useless equilibrium
As the wind tunes through this vigilant bronze
I hear again the sure confusing drum.

Couldn't that have been written about John Clare? More can be found about Francis Ledwidge on the museum website at <http://www.francisledwidge.com/>. Peter Cox also wrote about his visit to the Ledwidge museum in the Newsletter of December 2004.

Mike Mecham

John Clare in Epping Forest

John Clare – his 'living' heritage is alive and well in Epping Forest. Society member, Pete Relph, summarises three successful events he was invited to speak at which allowed him to proselytize on behalf of the John Clare Society.

Sunday 20 June – I attended Organic Lee – Rise Up, a special Open Day that invited people to visit this organic farm situated on the Lee side of the steep hillside escarpment that bounds Epping Forest. This former Waltham Forest Council nursery was vacated and left to suffer dereliction, but a wonderful group of enthusiasts have worked wonders and it is now almost in full production. For further information visit <http://www.hornbeam.org.uk>.

It's run in a very businesslike fashion, has a ten-year rotation scheme, and apprentice scheme and welcomes local voluntary helpers. Their theme for this Open Day was John Clare. They had chosen him because he favoured 'commons' that allowed ordinary folk to benefit from communally available assets.

I gave a brief talk on Clare and visited 'John Clare's Corner', where I saw his image carved in local oak.

Wednesday 17 July – I was invited by the Corporation of London to speak about John Clare in the Forest at The View, the visitor centre for the Forest. [Ed. Peter Cox wrote a full account of this occasion for the last Newsletter, October 2013.]

Wednesday 15 August – The weather was reasonably clement and a goodly crowd turned up for the Plaque Ceremony at Lippits Hill Lodge, which was once part of the asylum run by Doctor Allen where Clare was confined. Amongst the crowd were neighbours who live in properties formerly used by Allen.

The present owners, Eddie and Lorna Kirkland, are very keen on heritage and were enthusiastic and generous supporters of the idea of installing a plaque to commemorate Clare's stay at the Lodge.

The plaque was revealed by a former Mayor of Waltham Abbey. We then adjourned to the courtyard and enjoyed a resplendent buffet and entertainment. Unfortunately clouds began to build up and spots of rain heralded more to come, so Eddie, our host, shepherded us into the covered swimming pool and the show went on.



The new plaque installed on Lippets Hill Lodge, August 2013.

I said a few opening words and read two poems, as requested, on the themes: ancient trees and gypsies. 'Langly Bush' and 'The Gypsy Camp' (in Epping Forest) seemed to fit the bill. Then musicians from the Loughton Folk Club entertained the crowd with their homespun music including two songs about the Forest and Clare.

It was a very happy and successful occasion and our hosts were really pleased.

Pete Relph

Ronald Blythe, *Time by the Sea: Aldeburgh 1955-1958*, Faber & Faber, 2013, 272 pp., £15.99.

Ronnie's latest book is a reminiscence of the time spent in Suffolk after leaving his librarian job in Colchester to work with the Aldeburgh Festival and take up a career in writing. He had become acquainted with John and Christine Nash whilst still in Kent and this opened the doors to the sort of artistic community an aspiring writer needed in the 1950s.

The book is packed with humorous reminiscences of a cultural élite it is hard to envisage today living in such a confined area 'by the sea'. This is demonstrated by the most wonderful anecdotes: Dr Elizabeth Garrett Anderson moving out of Alde House into a much warmer flat in the stable block and the local aldermen trying to persuade her that this was not in keeping with her place in society; an invitation for a drink at the residence of E.M.Forster, to actually spend until nine in the evening indexing for the biography of Forster's aunt, with only a sherry and a biscuit for sustenance (the household having eaten at lunch time), to return home cold and hungry; being taken out in the car by Juliet Guttmann – a three-wheeler with no floor.

And what of the sea? He goes on to talk about the opiate effect it has on the senses: 'Coasts provide the ultimate sites for meditation. Their tides can carry our penultimate thoughts'. His description of being by the sea is hypnotic in its poetry.

It is an excellent book, and I would thoroughly recommend it. It has the humour of Wodehouse, but at the same time draws the reader back to long relaxing days spent at the seaside listening to the squawking of the gulls and the sound of the waves hitting the rocks. For me, it is such a magical memory.

Linda J Curry



Maggie Hambling,
Scallop, 2003,
Aldeburgh beach.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Thursday 6 March 2014, John Clare Cottage, 10am-12 noon – Edmund Blunden’s War: the war had won and would go on winning.

Edmund Blunden is best known as one of the War Poets. He survived the First World War and went on to a successful literary and academic career. He was the first to edit John Clare’s poems for publication and was instrumental in raising the profile of a number of 18th and 19th century British poets.

Discover more about his life and work from his daughter, Margi Blunden, at this unique talk. Cost £10 per person including coffee. To book your place please contact John Clare Cottage, Woodgate, Helpston, Peterborough, Cambs. PE6 7ED (01733 253330).

Saturday 17 May, 150th Anniversary concert, 7pm at St. John’s Church, Cathedral Square, Peterborough.

The Fairhaven Singers conducted by Ralph Woodward. The Bishop of Peterborough and the Deputy Lord Mayor intend to be present at this concert, which is supported by the John Clare Cottage Trust.

Tickets: £12.50 reserved seats and £10 unreserved. An interval glass of wine. Tickets from Peterborough Visitor Information Centre and Ron Ingamells (rjinghamells@btinternet.com) 01480 811608. Book early!

Sunday, 18 May, All Saints Church Northampton, special Clare-related Evening Service with performance of the winning entry from the Composition Competition.

30-31 May 2014, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK – 150th Anniversary Conference – John Clare in Space: Poetry, Nature and Contemporary Culture. In essence, this will be a broad celebration of Clare, marking 150 years since his death on 20 May 1864, so the conference welcomes all original responses to the full breadth of his world and work. The conference is generously supported by the Oxford Brookes Poetry Centre, the John Clare Society and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Oxford Brookes.

Proposals for 20-minute papers are welcome and should be submitted by **1 March 2014** to Simon Kövesi: skovesi@brookes.ac.uk. For further details see: www.brookes.ac.uk.

11-13 July, John Clare Society Festival, Helpston.

Request for help!

To put on the John Clare Festival each year requires quite a lot of hard work especially on the day of the Festival (Saturday 12 July) and we would be most grateful for some hands-on help that day. I am appealing especially to local members asking for volunteers who could help us set up at the beginning and clear away at the end of the day.

We would also welcome new members to our small Planning Group. We meet about four times a year in Helpston, and if any member is willing to join us, we would be very grateful.

If you could possibly help us in either or both of these ways please give me a ring on 01353 668438 or email sueholgate@hotmail.co.uk

Thank you – Sue Holgate, Festival Secretary.

Other events for the 150th celebration include an exhibition by Peterborough Museum with a special day on **10 May**; poetry reading around Northampton and lunchtime lecture by Alan Moore.

As soon as full details of events become available they will be posted on the Society website or will be available from Ron Ingamells (contacts details p.18). **Alliance of Literary Societies Weekend With Marlowe in Canterbury**

This year's ALS weekend will be in Canterbury, with the Marlowe Society, 31 May and 1 June 2014. The venue will be The King's School. Apart from a small registration fee and the cost of refreshments (Saturday lunch and dinner), the weekend is free of charge - and all are welcome. The Saturday will be taken up with talks on Marlowe, including a visit to the Walpole collection of English Literary Manuscripts at King's, and short enactment of *Dr Faustus*. On the Sunday, those attending morning service in the Cathedral will get the opportunity for a free look round. The full timetable and a booking form are available on the ALS website. Contact Linda Curry at l.j.curry@bham.ac.uk if you need any further details.

Amendment to Friends of Festival 2013 list published earlier

Apologies for errors in the Friends of Festival 2013 list published in the last edition of the Newsletter. Here is a correct list: Janice Archer, Miss M A Bates, Richard Burleigh, David Butcher, David and Christine Carlin, Russell C Carter, Tim Chilcott, David Cowell, Peter Cox, Linda J Curry, Mike Davis, David Day, Keith Downs, Mike Dunne, Marcia Egar, Jessica Finch, Martin Gisby, Norman F Goodman, Margaret Heppell, Bob Heyes, Christopher Holmes, Paul Johnson, Mr D H & Mrs M O Jones, Bob Kelly, Norman Lee, Peter Lee, L Little, Thomas Long, Malcolm Morrison, Kathy & Jim McVittie, Roy Park, Shirley Penny, Nigel Rathmell, Heather Reeves, Mr T Richards, Mr J a B & Mrs A Robbins, Audrey Russell Smith, S A Sullivan, Thomas Ryder, Susan Savva, Michael Sharpe, Leslie Sinclair, Bridget Smith, Gillian Stokes, Anne Street, Nancy Titman, Leslie G Tooby, Jackie Tucker, M G Wallis, Mrs D A Ward, Phillip K Wearne.

Finally – a message from Mavis Leverington, our Sales Officer, about Festival Sales...

We had a very good response to our members' sales stall at last year's Festival (July 2013). Thank you to everyone who helped us achieve the figure of £921.

There were eager hands reaching out for *This Happy Spirit* as Carry Akroyd delivered it, hot off the press. It is the beautifully produced companion to *The Wood is Sweet*, selected and edited by Kelsey Thornton and Carry Akroyd, illustrated by Carry. We sold 46 copies, some as part of the special festival offer jointly with *The Wood is Sweet*, which was very popular.

We have also been very fortunate in the number of books donated for sale by members; these made us £241, very gratifying. We would like to pass on our thanks to those who have made these generous donations.

As usual, my thanks to everyone who sent in contributions to this Newsletter. Articles, reviews, reports, news items and visual material for the June issue should reach me by **9 May** please.

Valerie Pedlar

