

The Southwold Sailors' Reading Room NEWSLETTER 2015/6

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Dear Member,

Greetings, and welcome to your annual Newsletter. Since our celebrated and historic 150th Anniversary last year, we are delighted to see many new Members join, bringing our numbers up to over 250. This is a notable increase on the year before, due in part to additional publicity and a much higher profile in the local community.

This year we lost one of our oldest and best known members, Geoff Wilyman, who died in August.



Geoff used to turn up at The Reading Room with his accordion, to sing and tell tales of his life at sea. He was one of the town's great characters, and will be greatly missed by us all.

The Sailors' Reading Room depends on membership fees to meet on-going running costs, including maintenance and repairs. Our target is a membership of 300, so please do encourage wider family and friends to join, to ensure that The SSRR will continue to bring tranquility and inspiration to future generations.

Fundraising: To supplement the income from membership, over £2000 has been raised this year by Reading Room volunteers, at events in both The SSRR and in the Town.

A sincere vote of thanks must go to our Hon.

Secretary, Anthea Marriner, who has organised regular fundraisers for many years, supported by volunteers.

On 27th June The SSRR took a street stall at The Southwold Arts Festival, selling our superb selection of merchandise, including tea towels, shopping bags, jigsaw puzzles, pens and prints.

On 5th August Anthea arranged a cake stall outside Lloyds Bank, and on 31st August Ian Denny staged his special Tombola at The SSRR, now a regular Bank Holiday feature!

At Easter The SSRR played host to the launch of a new book by the nationally acclaimed local writer Julia Blackburn. *'Threads, the delicate life of John Craske'*, is a biographic novel about a Norfolk fisherman-turned-self-taught-artist who painted stylised marine pictures and wove tapestries, when his health failed. Many literary folk attended the launch, including writers Blake Morrison and Esther Freud, the bookseller James Daunt and the literary agent (and SSRR Member) David Godwin. Publishers Jonathan Cape were delighted to use The Sailors' Reading Room for this prestigious literary event, and made a generous donation to SSRR funds.



Ghost Stories photo: Keith Warren

The highlight of our fund-raising year was the return of 'Ghost Stories by Candlelight'. This followed on from the Town's Christmas Lights switch-on event, on 28th November.

Over 100 tickets were sold for the two performances; the later show being heavily over subscribed. The evening featured old and new spooky tales set in the town, as well as adaptations of chilling stories by M R James, who set many of his powerful scenarios on the Suffolk coast.

Thanks go to our very frightening readers Mark Aldridge, Wendy Mantin, David Palmer, Pamela Stewart, and Cait Vulliamy, as well as Committee members who managed the publicity, organised the seating, sold tickets & merchandise and manned the doors. The evening was produced by Laurence Vulliamy and raised in excess of £600, a surprising and welcome contribution to funds.

Billiards and Snooker: Over £1000 has been invested recently to bring the table up to the highest specification, with new cushions and pockets. Gary Farnam has organised members' tournaments for several years now, and with Snooker playing membership now standing at 66, Gary has agreed to be our games co-ordinator. To book the table for your game, please look for details on the SSRR website.

Committee member Vincent Austin has presented The SSRR with a superb, original watercolour showing a couple of figures scanning the papers. Could they be you?



Vince's picture is not only on permanent display in The Sailors' Reading Room, it is also available as a high quality greetings card.

A set of 7 blank cards is available for £5.00 + £1.00 p&p. and to order please send a cheque and your contact details to The Sailors' Reading Room, or look at our website.

Material support for The Reading Room continues with donations of old photographs and model ships. We are especially interested in accepting old books about traditional boats and the coast. All gifts are always extremely welcome, but due to a lack of archive space we can only accept items that are connected to Southwold and the sea.

Sadly our Hon. Secretary Anthea Marriner is stepping down after seven years of dedicated service. Anthea has brought a very special quality to the role at the SSRR; with her verve for fundraising and a tireless dedication to day-to-day detail she will be missed. If anyone is able to help The Reading Room and take on this valuable honorary position please do let the Committee know by e-mail.

We are also in the process of digitising our Membership portfolio in order to save valuable time, paper and the cost of postage. We already ask you to pay by standing order or direct debit wherever possible, and if you use e-mail please ensure we have your details. We would like to thank Olwen Howard for all her help and diligence as Membership Secretary. If you would like to help The Sailors' Reading Room and take on this essential role please contact the Committee.

Finally, our fundraising events not only bring in valuable resources, they also raise the profile of The Sailor's Reading Room. But sadly they cannot take place without volunteers. If you have suggestions as to how we can raise money in the future, or can help us to stage events on a regular basis, please contact: laurencevulliamy@gmail.com

On behalf of us all on East Cliff, we wish you a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

Vince Austin & Laurence Vulliamy