



Friends Of The Priaulx Library

March 2009 Newsletter

AGM Announcement

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held at 7.00pm in The Priaulx Library on the 23rd of April.

The offices of Vice-President and of 2 Committee Members, presently held by Adv. Gordon Dawes, John Bedford and Wendy Byrom respectively, fall due for election / re-election. Any nominations should be submitted in writing.

Any nominations for these positions must be notified to the Secretary no later than the 22nd of April, the day prior to the AGM being held. All nominations should be sent to the Secretary, Gavin Lanoe via email gavin@lanoe.net, by telephone 07781 127798 or by post to 1 Pine Tree Estate, L'islet, St Sampson, Guernsey, GY2 4EX.

Lift

You may have noticed the building of the lift shaft progressing on the north gable of the Library. Although initial progress was slowed down by the exceptionally cold weather preventing block laying being undertaken at the programmed time, the building contractor fully expects to finish by the original contract completion date. Works to the new lift shaft roof has commenced and the lift components have arrived in the island. As the Priaulx Library is a not for profit organisation it has been able to take advantage of a special discount offered to them by Otis Lifts.

In terms of paying for the project we have just, and only just, received enough funds to meet the principal costs. However other recommendations in the Access Audit Report, such as ramps, workstations for the disabled etc., cannot be afforded. We have applied for help from the Guernsey Lottery but, if Members can persuade their contacts to help, donations are still more than desirable.

Library Matters

2009 is the 120th anniversary of the opening of the library. It is Guernsey's first and oldest free public library and there are number of events planned to celebrate the occasion. The first exhibition of the year, a celebration of Millinery was very successful. Later in the year, there will be mini-exhibitions on Darwin (who has his own anniversary this year) and Osmond de Beauvoir Priaulx, the founder of the library. There will be an open day on the 11th of July coinciding with a major exhibition of Guernsey art by the acclaimed Canadian artist Christian Corbet and in the Autumn, a photography exhibition at The Gallery in Mansell Street. Hoping to build on the success of the photography exhibition in summer 2008, the new event will again provide plenty of interest to all those fascinated by Guernsey's past and provide plenty of opportunities to own an unusual print.

An exhibition of Children's Literature is currently underway and will close in four weeks. This exhibition will be replaced with an exhibition focusing on Darwin.

Flemish Manuscripts

On the evening of 17th February, Dr Scot McKendrick, Head of Western Manuscripts at the British Library, gave a genuinely fascinating talk to the Friends of the Priaulx Library on the subject of manuscripts generally, Flemish manuscripts at the Library and the Priaulx's own Flemish manuscript. The talk was illustrated throughout with examples from the Library's collection as well as images of the Priaulx manuscript. The event was very well attended. 6 new members joined on the night and the event concluded with a lively question and answer session. Our sincere thanks to Dr McKendrick for coming to Guernsey to address us.

Membership news

Several new members have recently joined, and we now have 171. There are seven corporate members, and we are pleased to welcome Schroders Private Bank among their number. We have 14 UK members and our first international member (in the USA) joined this year. Subscriptions (£10) were due on the 1st January, and most have now been paid. If your subscription is still outstanding you will have received a reminder. The Committee has set a goal of 200 members by the end of the year, and all members are urged to encourage others to join. Membership application forms, including the standing order form, are available on the Friends' website. Let's make 2009 a real boost to the Friends!

Guernsey Heroes of the Royal Society

The project to hold an exhibition and lectures to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the Royal Society in 2010 is progressing. Research is currently being carried out on several Guernseymen who were Fellows of the Society, and includes a number of documents held by the Priaulx Library. The first lecture, on the history and archives of the Royal Society, is scheduled to take place on 23rd of November 2009. Further details will be announced in the next newsletter.

Volunteers

Volunteers continue to make very good progress scanning the Carel Toms photographs and over 6000 have now been scanned. Volunteers are still greatly needed for various tasks such as scanning the Carel Toms Photographs and Negatives, Newspapers and also to preserve books. If you would like to volunteer please contact the Secretary to the Friends, Gavin Lanoe on email to gavin@lanoe.net or by phone 07781 127798.

New Additions

The memoirs of a Guernsey Police Officer by Trevor Savident. These are the very funny memoirs of a true Guern who served in the police force for over 26 years. Written in a similar style to the George Torode books, this is a highly recommended read.

Firefighting in Guernsey: an Illustrated History. The first detailed history of Guernsey's Fire and Rescue Service does justice to its important subject with a wealth of photographs and anecdotes.

Chapel and Swastika: Methodism in the Channel Islands during the German occupation , 1940-1945 by David M. Chapman. A fascinating story of the Methodist Church in Guernsey which during the 1930s and 40s had more churches in the Channel islands than any other denomination.

La Défence de Guernesey by Jean Antoine De Magnac. Facsimile, transcript and translated editions. La Défence de Guernesey is an important Manuscript tucked away in the Priaulx Library Strongroom. Written by an émigré Frenchman, it is basically a military history of the Napoleonic Wars with an emphasis on the new defences around Guernsey's coast. Replete with previously unpublished hand-drawn maps and other fascinating details, it is a very important document that has not had the use it deserves due to its fragile state. It has now been photographed and is available to view as a facsimile, a transcription and a translation. The Priaulx library would like to sincerely thank Mrs. Gillian Lenfestey for all her hard work in producing these vital records.