



The Newsletter of the Friends of Puddletown library — issue number 4, January 2009

# PLUM

**Puddletown Library, Upkeep and Maintenance**

## Our volunteers make history *(see over for details)*

### ***Carnival backs us yet again***

PUDDLETOWN CARNIVAL Committee has yet again shown its strong support for the work of the Friends of the Library. For the second year running the committee has made a generous donation to help us keep the library in the Village Hall open.

Last month our chairman, Mike Chaney, was presented with a cheque for £150 from the proceeds of last year's carnival. The previous year the organisers gave the Friends £250.

Stephen Buck, the Friends' treasurer, says that although this donation puts the organisation's finances on a firm footing, members should remember that subscriptions are now due...and that if we are to keep up our good work in the years to come, we will need reserves to be able to draw on. Stephen reminds us that the annual sub is £5 and £8 for couples.

**Cheques (payable to the Friends) or cash to 3 High St Puddletown DT2 8RT please**

MEMBERS OF the Friends of Puddletown library attracted widespread television, radio and newspaper attention when they made history before Christmas. On Monday 3 November they became the first volunteer librarians to take over the work of Dorset County Council's professional library staff — and run the library on their own.

Diana Bennett, of High Street, Puddletown, appeared on BBC South's regional political programme to explain how Friends members had been trained by the Dorset Library Service to stand in for the professional librarians.

'I explained that we were just supplementing the work of our much appreciated librarians as the opening hours were being cut by the county council to save money,' says Diana.

Lizzie Peckover, of Woods Cottage, The Green, and Mary Chadwick, from Melcombe Bingham, who help keep the Puddletown library open for an extra four hours a week, were pictured with our regular librarian, Marilyn Wheller, in the Echo (see P2).

Reports of our doings have also appeared in the Western Gazette, the Blackmore Vale Magazine — and even in the Guardian. And on local radio.

### **A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY**

*THE ANNUAL general meeting of the Friends of Puddletown Library will be held in the Library at 7.30pm on Monday 2 February. Please make a note of the date...and please try to come along.*

*Some of the present volunteers will report on their experiences and there will be the chance to see the new computerised book recognition system for those of you who haven't yet seen it in operation.*

*We still need a secretary so if you have the very little spare time the job requires, please don't be modest — don't wait to be asked.*

*The present chairman and treasurer are willing to serve again, as is the committee: Peter Bishop, Bill Maunder, Chris Leonard and Rosie Wyndham...but new blood is always welcome.*

**Your committee wishes all readers a very happy New Year**

## **Our Book Club takes off**



THE BOOK CLUB for the Friends of Puddletown Library is meeting to discuss a book its members have read for the first time on 21 January at 7.30pm in the library — thanks to the efforts of our committee member, Rosie Wyndham, who writes:

*'I have long dreamed of a chance to talk about books I've enjoyed with friends over a cup of coffee...and a local Book Club seemed the obvious way of getting like-minded people together. Our first exploratory meeting was me and just three other people...which didn't seem to bode well. But we weren't to be discouraged and we talked enthusiastically about the books we'd each like to read and went ahead and ordered them, through the library service. We are allowed 10 copies of each book on free extended loan...and the first book we'll be discussing will be Isabel Allende's Zorro.'*

*'We still have a couple of vacancies for reading members, if the idea appeals to you. Either let me know at 15 High Street, DT2 8RT (849277) — or come along on Wednesday, 21 January. You'll be most welcome.'*

## **"It's been a wonderful way to make a lot of new friends"**

★ Volunteers Lizzie Peckover (left) and Mary Chadwick take over the duties of regular librarian Marilyn Wheller (centre) as Puddletown Library makes history.  
★ Picture: Dorset Echo

BY THE time you read this the eleven volunteer Friends will have been at work in the library for more than two months...and their enthusiasm for the job seems as high as ever. Typical of them is Bee Newbold, of Catmead. 'We were new to the village,' she says, 'and working with the other volunteers and with the many different people who come into our library has been a wonderful way to make new friends.'

'I am very happy with the course of training we were given by the county council's library staff,' says Bee, 'and although we cannot deal with every problem we meet we seem to send most of our customers away happy.' Another relatively new Puddletown resident, Sylvia Hanby, who lives near the library in the High Street, finds that volunteering is by no means burdensome — 'We are on duty only once a fortnight,' she says.

## **Community tribute sets us a problem**

'THE GENEROSITY of the Puddletown Carnival Committee in giving the Friends group £150 is very welcome,' writes the group's chairman Mike Chaney, 'but it also sets us something of a poser. Keeping the library in Puddletown open for an extra four hours a week by voluntary effort is, of course, an important contribution to village life,' says Mike, 'but I am sure we can do more. I told the committee when they gave me the cheque that we would like to use the money to widen the use of the library and make it more attractive to more people. In particular I believe we should try to get more children and young people to use it. This may be hard when books are in competition with electronic entertainment — they may seem old fashioned by comparison. I wonder if we could set up a competition with prizes for youngsters who show that reading is still a lot of fun. Could we involve the two local schools? Any bright ideas?

'Another problem facing us,' writes Mike, 'is how to get younger people to become Friends — and especially how to get them to become volunteer librarians. As the existing hours of opening make it difficult for anyone working normal hours to do the present volunteer shifts (5.30-7.0pm on Mondays and 3.30-6.0pm on Fridays) perhaps we should be thinking of changing the hours during which volunteers work in the library.'

'There are some changes to report in the concessions we get as Friends members: we are now entitled to seven days free of hire charges, which is worth £2.80 a year. From April the free book reservation concession is being withdrawn as reserving books will then be free for everyone, members or not.'

'Please send any comments or ideas you have for widening the work we do to: 11 High Street, DT2 8RT or chaneatley@tiscali.co.uk. Or ring me on 848352.'

**If you have an e-mail address, please let Mike or Stephen have it: sending this electronically will save our legs — or postage costs**