

THE LIBRARY OF AVALON

The Reading Room

Autumn Equinox 2004

Volume 1, Issue 1

A New Era—A.G.M. 2004.

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There was a great turnout, earlier this year, (5th of April, to be precise) at the AGM of the Library of Avalon. More than two dozen people packed the main area of the Library to hear reports from the outgoing trustees, who appointed Sue Barnet to speak on their behalf. (In fact, Sue had taken on the bulk of the work of trusteeship for quite a while, owing to illnesses and family commitments of other trustees and had made it known that she wished to stand down as a trustee herself, after this meeting.)

The due process having been gone through over the last few weeks meant that five new trustee nominations had been received (see inside for report on the New Trustees) and after Sue's presentation of the annual

report and financial report the five nominations were unanimously accepted by the attending membership. Natasha Wardle was elected as Chairperson of the new trustees and offered a vote of thanks to Sue for all her hard work, in the last year, especially, and her role in training the mostly new team of volunteers.

Linda Danson, another new trustee, unfortunately unable to attend but voted in in her absence had previously left a huge "talking stick" that was brought into use for the second part of the evening, instigated by Andy Scott and hosted by Izzy Cadbury that was entitled "Visions and Practicalities".

See below for a full report.

"Visions and Practicalities"

The use of the talking stick was explained to all present and then it was passed around the circle of Library members present so all could have their uninterrupted say on what they wanted for the Library. The points raised were written up (large) by Andy on an A1 size pad over a whiteboard easel.

Just some of the points and proposals follow. A "Visioning Day" was proposed; business plans to be completed and submitted; volunteers' participation recognised/rewarded; select fiction only applicable to aims of Library; new computer and database;

"Amnesty" for overdue books?; tidy up call!; update catalogue/audit stock; pack away reserve foreign language stock; Helene Koppejan's contribution to be recognised (plaque/portrait?); liaise with other Libraries; better publicity; fundraising to be looked into; restructure membership fees; "Friends of the Library" proposed?; Open Day suggested; revive Literary Competition; encourage study groups to use the facilities; become known as a Centre of Excellence.

It was a highly entertaining evening and some of the above are already being put into operation.

Breaking News—RILKO Joins Forces With LoA.

The Research Into Lost Knowledge Organisation (RILKO) has been looking for a new home for its collection of books for some time. After some discussion and after visiting the Library of Avalon to see what our space had to offer they decided to bring their collection here. They have between 500 to 600 books that will soon be available (once catalogued and noted) for research purposes within the Library.

These books will not be made available for loan, but will provide a very useful addition to the Library Of Avalon's stock of specialised research material.

SWOT ing at the Library of Avalon

The new board of trustees and some of the volunteers got together at the beginning of May 2004 to take part in an exercise to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) as they perceived them, to take the Library of Avalon into the 21st Century.

STRENGTHS were:

Great Space! Wonderful Books
Classification System (copyrighted)
New computer on it's way Fiction section
Volunteer team! IT literate vols.
Charity Status and constitution
Past benefactors
Professional Librarian on hand

WEAKNESSES identified

Not enough shelf space Hidden away
Looks Cluttered No First Aid Box (rectified)
Not enough volunteers Poor record keeping
Opening times not right! Not enough Cash!

OPPORTUNITIES

Have an advertising strategy Writer's competition
Offer research facilities to academic institutions
Open days New books –expand stock even more
Training for volunteers New skills

THREATS

Library underused Loss of stock
Lack of funds at present Volunteers leaving
Security

There followed discussion as to which areas to prioritise and it was decided to do the following:

Have a designated area for bags to minimise the threat of people stealing books
Proceed with plans to buy a new computer— (at the time of writing this has been purchased and is up and running)
Arrange an Action Day to clear space (see below)
Arrange a training schedule for volunteers
Catalogue and audit books.

STOP PRESS! There will be a book amnesty from now until Xmas 2004. Just have a look and see if there are any Library of Avalon books on your shelves and bring them in no questions asked!

Action Day - 17th May.

The Action Day proposed at the AGM was scheduled for the above date and volunteers and trustees alike turned up to give the Library a good overhaul.

Helene Koppejan's collection of foreign language texts was carefully boxed up with clear indications as to how many books and which categories were in each box. The boxes were numbered and taken away by one of the trustees to be placed in secure, dry storage. This meant that this (unfortunately) little used resource is still available on request, but shelving was freed up to accommodate new stock, a lot of which were new books donated by publishers. These had been piled up in front of one of the Library's best features, architecturally, the massive fireplace, and these boxes were moved onto other shelves.

The whole Library was given a good clean, washed down, dusted and vacuumed, with incense used to clear the air and new crystals and plants brought in to clear the space.

The shelving in the "annexe" was moved round to give a clearer sightline from the librarian's desk to the far wall of the Library, to help with security and ease of movement.

A big thanks to all who took part in this satisfying day of Action that really made a difference to the "feel" of the Library. Since this day there has been a lot more activity in the Library.

UPDATE: At a suggestion from Julie, the cleared shelves have been designated "Fiction Island" and our stock of great fiction is now more accessible. Andy and Sally have moved stock around to give more space on other shelves.

New Era - New Trustees.

When the call went out earlier in the year for help in getting the Library of Avalon more ready to face the 21st century it attracted what amounted to a virtually new team of volunteers, trained by Sue Barnet before she decided to move on with her commitment to her clients in her other fields of work. (We all wish her well with future plans).

It had been decided at meetings through the winter to try to fill a full complement of five trustees, in order to spread the load and not repeat the mistake of loading too much on to one pair of shoulders.

The people who responded and who were nominated at the AGM in April gave various reasons and could offer various skills.

This is intended as a brief introduction.

Natasha Wardle, elected as Chairperson, has "a passion for books", reflected in her past employment at the Bookbarn, supervising a team of 20 assessing and cataloguing/pricing antiquarian

books, she had also worked within the Charity sector for eight years and is currently managing the Chalice Well Bookshop.

Izzy Cadbury is currently a volunteer at the Library of Avalon after spending over twenty years as a qualified Librarian in the Public Library sector, she was also Membership Secretary of the Norwood Society in South London.

Linda Danson has "a delight in books and a love of all things esoteric" and believes that "all voices from all sectors and faiths should be heard", she has had experience in fundraising activities and has worked as a basic skills tutor.

Paul Fletcher has had over 25 years experience with Community projects, including an "Information Centre" in Bangor and "Greenhouse", a 13 room community project in N. Wales. He worked with Sir George Trevelyan in building the "Onearth Network Of Light" and is currently involved with the "Avalon" magazine and Library at Chalice Well.

Philomena Houlihan-Wood has "a passionate interest in, and love of esoteric and mystical books", she has a degree in English and History from Dublin University and has links with the book publishing industry.

Article in Avalon Magazine.

When I first came to live in the area I joined the Library of Avalon as a volunteer and became a Life Member, as I thought the concept was such a good one, and the space was so fitting. As I learnt more about where the Library was up to I discovered more about the history and where it had been.

At one of the regular meetings over the winter where the editor of "Avalon" magazine attended I offered to research further and write up this history

for publication. The result of these endeavours appeared in the Summer 2004 edition, (Issue 27).

Synchronicity then stepped in, as "Avalon" had received, independently, two further, slightly more esoteric interpretations of the "Library of Avalon" theme and these were linked under the banner "The Libraries of Avalon". So, like London buses, "You wait ages to read about the Library of Avalon and then three come along at once.....typical!" Andy Scott.

How You Can Help

If reading the rest of this Newsletter has whetted your appetite to get more involved with the activities at the "Library of Avalon" and you are wondering how you can, we'll tell you.

You can: join as a borrowing member of the library. For an annual fee you will be able to borrow up to three books for three weeks at a time as well as using the Reading Room facilities.

You can: offer your time as a volunteer. We are always looking for people who can commit to a few hours per week, on a regular basis please, as we would like to be able to keep to regular opening

hours, ideally to cover a six day week.

You can: donate your unwanted books, (tapes, videos, CDs also welcomed) if they fit into any of our subject areas. See our classification list to see if they are appropriate.

You can: give us your money! We are a Charity so rely on donations and memberships to help fund our very existence, the facts of life mean the bills have to be paid!

You can: pay us to use the space to host your group activity, or ask to put on a talk/workshop.

The Library of Avalon

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The **Reading Room** has not been published for a while but it is envisioned that it will be a Quarterly Newsletter (at least) to keep the membership and possible future members up to date with what is happening at the Library of Avalon.

Any member is welcome to submit book reviews or items of interest. We intend to publish at the quarters of the year so the deadline for the next issue will be the *beginning of November*. Please leave these at the Library for the attention of **Andy** (address opposite left).

The Library is currently open from 1.30 to 4.30 pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, and from 2.30 to 4.30 pm most Saturdays. We are currently training up new volunteers and hope to extend these times in the very near future.

This edition has been edited and typeset by Andy Scott with contributions from Dearbhaile Bradley, Paul Fletcher, Izzy Cadbury, Natasha Wardle, Linda Danson and Philomena Houlihan-Wood. Current volunteers include Julie, Sally, Nuria and Izzy. Many thanks to all.

Book Reviews.

We have about 10,000 books in the Library of Avalon and we thought it would be a good idea to run a column of reviews of just some of the titles available. For the first issue of The Reading Room in this new format **Dearbhaile Bradley** gives her account of just five of the thousands available.

Moyra Caldecott : Guardians of the Tall Stones.

(NJ CAL) This trilogy of a fantasy past in which stone circles were the centre of a sophisticated magical system does not set out to be highbrow fiction. At times the characters are somewhat two-dimensional and the storyline predictable. However, what I think makes this allegorical tale well worth reading is the way in which Moyra Caldecott uses it to make some powerful assertions about the nature of reality and the influence of past lives. As fiction it may be flawed but the ideas presented are both interesting and relevant.

Gardner Dozois: The Brest of New SF (NJ DOZ)

The Library is full of SF gems and for me this was definitely one of them! It opens with a crackin' story by Ursula Le Guin which is both deeply moving and thought provoking. If you enjoy science fiction this is a satisfying read. There are a couple of duds such as you'd expect in any collection, but then, you might like different stories from me!

Diane Mariechild: Motherwit (QB MAR)

I consider this one of the best books I have ever encountered for understanding, developing and working with psychic abilities. The exercises for grounding, centring and visualisation are excellent. (I've been

using them for years, both as an individual and in working with groups). She covers pretty much everything that is relevant. The understanding that we co-create reality rather than are individually responsible for the way events unfold was particularly helpful to me on my journey. Truthfully, I can't recommend this book highly enough—it is a classic in it's field.

Ellen Bass & Laura Davis : The Courage To Heal—A guide for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse. (KC BAS)

This is a text that I have recommended as reading both to clients and student counsellors. It is inescapably American, sometimes irritatingly so and can be a bit repetitive. I also see the assumption of the survivor's gender as a serious weakness. Overall, though, it provides readable and comprehensive coverage of all the relevant aspects of a survivor's healing journey, using moving first person stories as relevant. Relatives and friends of survivors seem to find it particularly helpful.

Susan Jeffers : Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway.

(KD JEF) The first time I read this book I found it irritating because of what I saw as the endless repetition of the American Fairytale in which the magic wand of this exercise or that deposited the initially unhappy individual on the road to success and "happy ever after". However, deceptively simple as these exercises are, they do work! Particularly seminal in my own life were the "Pain to Power" vocabulary (p39), the basic "I can handle it" message and the no-lose decision making process described in Chapter 7.

(In case you're new to the library and wondering, the letters in brackets indicate where you will find these books on the shelves).