

## THE LIBRARY OF AVALON

# The Reading Room

Winter Solstice 2004

## A Word From Our Patron.

Volume 1, Issue 2

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*The Library of Avalon has a distinguished local author as it's Patron. One of the Founders of the Library, Geoffrey Ashe sent the following message.*

*"One item that has always had a place in my wallet is my Founder Member's card for the Library of Avalon. Actually, it says "The Avalon Library Association", but the present name soon followed. That original card is still a valued memento. The date on it is September 1st. 1988 and on the back is a motto I suggested, a quotation from the great French Socialist Jean Jeures: "Take from the altars of the past the fire, not the ashes".*

*Maybe that was more appropriate at the time than it is now. The original concept was more limited. The Library started as a Library of British Legend, a unique special interest project. There didn't seem to be any one place where you could find anything and everything in that area. "British Legend" books are still on the shelves, but the Library has branched out amazingly. It has become unique in a different way, not as a specific resource but as a multiple one, with something for many unexpected interests. It's good to see it flourishing."*

*Geoffrey Ashe. Patron.*

## Library of Avalon Lectures.

Following a discussion between Andy Scott and one of the more recent volunteers in the Library, Clint Denyer, the Library of Avalon will be holding a series of monthly Lectures from January 2005.

**Clint Denyer** has taken on board the organisation of the series and as a noted speaker on the paranormal has volunteered to give the first talk himself, entitled

### "The Soul and the Paranormal (Dimensional Shifts/2012 and The Hollow Earth)" .

"How the soul merges with the paranormal and how normality and paranormal mix and fuse together in dimensional shifts we are seeing in our world today.

We see the connections to ancient civilisations, ETs and the importance of the Hollow Earth, the evidence for this and it's importance for the future."

It will take place at the Library on **Thursday 27th January** starting at **7.30 pm** and ending at approximately **9.30 pm**. The cost will be **£4.00 waged and £2.00 unwaged**. This is to cover heating costs etc.

Further speakers are being arranged for February and March and talks will be ongoing throughout 2005, all Lectures taking place on the **last Thursday of the month**. (See flyers for details, next year.)

## RILKO Joins Forces With LOA.

The **Research Into Lost Knowledge Organisation** (RILKO) has been looking for a new home for it's collection of books for some time. Following the announcement in the last issue, once again Andy has shown his "visioning" side and Clint has shown his practical side and new shelving has been built in the Library to house the collection of over 400 books, along with the installation of new spotlighting. Andy has converted RILKO's A-Z catalogue into the Library's classification system and there is a team of people currently hard at work labelling up the books for display. These books provide a fantastic wealth of material and as some are published by RILKO themselves will be a unique resource for readers in the Library of Avalon. The new shelving will also house the **Wessex Research** collection as both of these organisations' works are **for reference only** and can be supervised more easily in their new location.

# Visioning at the Library of Avalon.

Following the SWOT ing day in May, some of the new board of trustees and volunteers got together in November 2004 to take part in an exercise to find ways of taking the Library forwards. The discussion was split into two sections, "immediate" and "ongoing".

## **Immediate:**

**New Shelving** to house the RILKO and Wessex Research collections was to be installed before the Open Day planned for the 10th December ( report in next Newsletter). At the time of writing this has been done.

Health and Safety: Policy needs writing up and fire exit signs need providing. (Done). Fire extinguishers will be checked on a regular basis.

**We need a proper Library ladder/steps.**

**Also wanted: New desk (in hand); bell for over the door; fire bell; secure glass fronted shelving for rarer books.** (If you can help, contact the Library when open).

"Job File" or "To do List" needs to be drawn up so volunteers know what needs doing in the library on a regular basis.

Scanner needs installing to provide basic copying service.

A portrait of Helene Koppejan has been commissioned to hang in the Library.

Children's religious books will be better used at the Quest community library so they have been

boxed awaiting collection.

Volunteers have come forward to tidy the courtyard garden as it is overgrown at present.

Volunteer photos will be done to identify who is on duty when.

Stocktaking needs to be undertaken ASAP.

## **Ongoing:**

**Andy and Sally** have taken over responsibility for membership matters. The trustees are considering a flyer produced by Andy proposing a "Friends of the Library of Avalon" (FOLOA) scheme.

We need to have at least one representative from the Library at any group meeting for security purposes.

New groups proposed: Library Lectures (see front page); Magdalene study group (see below); Invite authors for book signings etc.; Lunchtime talks (for elderly residents); Women's group sometime in 2005; (Since the meeting: Performance Poetry group/guests.)

Website: to be overhauled early in 2005.

Periodicals need listing.

LOA could offer research facilities for academics etc. (could be paid work for volunteer?).

Chair of Trustees to liaise with book publishers for new donations.

Newsletter: ongoing quarterly.

# Magdalene Study Group.

For two thousand years Mary Magdalene has been a fascinating enigma. At times venerated, at times reviled, there is currently a resurgence of interest in her and her story.

In searching History for her true identity one encounters: a harlot; a priestess; a woman of Royal descent; a bride; Jesus' beloved disciple; the Holy Grail; the first Church and the personification of Wisdom.

"For I am the first and last, I am the honoured one and the scorned one, I am the whore and the Holy one, I am the wife and the Virgin, I am the silence that is incomprehensible,

I am the utterance of my name."

*(Extract from Thunder Perfect Mind.)*

Beginning in **February 2005**, over the course of six fortnightly meetings we will explore together the Historical, Mythical and Esoteric aspects of Mary Magdalene. Each meeting will focus on a different theme and members are invited to contribute their research, knowledge and wisdom to the group.

**The cost will be £30 for all six meetings.**

For more information contact **Natasha Wardle** on **01458 830549**.

# Volunteering—A Personal View.

According to the dictionary a volunteer is one who enters any service of his or her own free choice. Certainly no coercion was necessary when I pushed open the door and asked Sue Barnett, who was then organising the staffing, if I could be of any service to the Library. The answer was an unqualified yes. I was soon educated in the ways of the Library of Avalon that are as peculiar to this wonderful institution as the library is itself singular. This was two and a half years ago and I am still as thrilled to step into its magic environment as I was that first day.

To me, volunteering means enjoying the company of like-minded souls who are dedicated to maintaining and improving this excellent resource. It means that, however odd and strange the prevailing TV culture might make me feel, being a searcher after esoteric knowledge, here is a place where I might feel at home. It means I can spend an afternoon a week in the company of some of the most interesting books and magazines ever published. It also, most importantly means that I can be of assistance to others who wander in to the Library.

The people here are marvellous. I derive great pleasure from working with such a capable crew. Each of us contributes quite different interests, talents and skills. Whereas some of us may be wizards with computers, others have green fingers. One may be skilled at calligraphy while another is handy with DIY skills.

As special as the people are the books. There are over 10,000 at present and more are coming in every week. Extraterrestrials, astrology, divination, the history and mythology of Glastonbury and Arthurian literature are my particular interests and if I were cast away on a desert shore I would want to take with me the entire contents of Fiction Island, so I could read at leisure all the Science Fiction that I have not yet had a chance to cuddle up with.

I have worked in some fine library buildings but the premises of the LOA have superb and distinctive features. Ancient wooden beams hold up the ceiling; the solid stone walls have been constructed from the same sombre limestone that graces the Abbey; the enormous fireplace would not look out of place in a manorial hall; the doorway could have been used as an extra in the Lords of the Rings movies.

The Library is not, however, altogether archaic. We have electric lighting and warm halogen heaters; our catalogue is

## The Archdrude and the Astrologer.

"Along with many other Avalonians I recently went along to the Launch of Julian Cope's latest book, **"The Megalithic European"**. (See review, back page.) I felt upset that I was unable to afford the cost and thought... "Aha! Libraries! This ought to be in the Library of Avalon." I was directed to the publishers' reps. (from Element/Harper Collins) who were standing apart, in business suits. Swallowing my shyness and firing up my enthusiasm, I blurted out, "Would you consider donating a copy to the Library of Avalon?", expecting them to say they would think about it. Instead, they said "Yes, ok."

and I went to join the queue to get it signed. Julian Cope gave everybody time and the fact that I am Danish prompted a good talk about Odin and archaeological aspects of Denmark. He signed the book "For Avalon Library, In there, Julian Cope". I thought that was a lovely gesture and would like to thank Julian Cope, Element and Jamie George from Gothic Image, for arranging the event. I was so pleased to be able to hand this book to the Library of Avalon. Maybe many more authors and publishers would give a positive response if approached by us, where and when we meet them." Lone Bang.

## 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** is 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 February*. Please leave these at the Library for the attention of **Andy** (address opposite left).

The Library is currently open from 11.00 am to 4.30 pm on Tuesdays, 1.30 to 4.30 pm on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, and from 12.00 to 4.00 pm most Saturdays. We are currently training up new volunteers and hope to extend these times even further in the very near future.

This edition has been edited and typeset by Andy Scott with contributions from Geoffrey Ashe, Lone Bang, E.J.Kimber, Natasha Wardle, Izzy Cadbury, Clint Denyer and Joanna Laxton. Current volunteers include Andy, Julie, Sally, Clint, Marie, Heather, Nuria, Alison, Elisabeth, Kyrin, Mary, Adrien, Sandipo and Izzy. Many thanks to all.

There was a slight oversight in the first issue of "The Reading Room", in that the co-opted Trustee's details were omitted from the **Trustee Profiles**. **Joanna Laxton** has been drafted in to help with the running of the Library. She worked in public health for 18 years as a trainer and manager of Community Education projects. While living in Wales she helped to establish "The Greenhouse" community centre and served as Chair for several years and as a Director. Within the Centre she founded the Health Information Centre and Birth Centre which offered education and access to an extensive library of books on Complementary medicine and natural childbirth. She has been involved with the "Network of Light". She brings various skills, such as fundraising and a passion for community access to shared resources, along with a love of books and interest in esoteric studies.

## 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.

**"The Megalithic European" Julian Cope. (FB COP)** Julian Cope is a great performer, but behind his show act there lies years of dedicated work visiting and revisiting the places he describes in his books. It is also evident that he has spent much time researching the history and mythology behind the Sacred Sites referred to and has spoken to many people along the way. Clearly it is a valuable book for modern day Pilgrims and a superb alternative to commercial tourist guides. I myself, was excited by the amount of work and understanding he has put into the Scandinavian section, and the same attention to detail has gone into the other countries visited. Lone Bang.

**"The Synthesis of Yoga" Sri Aurobindo. (VJ AUR)** The antithesis of a pop Guru or cult leader, Sri Aurobindo, (1872 –1950) was a national

hero of the Indian independence movement, who just happened to be an epic poet-visionary of a futuristic, evolutionary mysticism that has a distinguished following worldwide. His inner knowledge of all Yoga has been acknowledged in India as extraordinarily profound, and although this is not light reading he takes no perverse Gurdjeffian delight in making things harder for the reader than this deep subject matter demands.

It is an illuminating and inspiring book for those who persist with it, which sees all traditions of Yoga as interlinked (by what others would refer to as the Fourth Way) yet best understood afresh, ultimately, not by egotistical effort but the possibility of developing true inner intuition guided directly by a Divine contact through a "Purna Yoga" or Yoga of receiving. This is in spirit akin to certain Sufi practices, to Subud, and, indeed, to Quakerism, though Sri Aurobindo's metaphysical utterances tend to be far bolder. Highly recommended.

The Sri Aurobindo classics held by the Library of Avalon can fairly be said to be among his most illustrious titles and deserve to be borrowed and read far more often. E.J. Kimber.