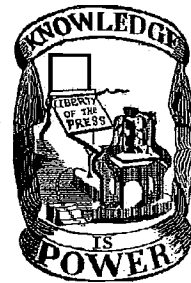


Shelf Life



The Newsletter of the Working Class Movement Library

Registered Charity No.1115731

Issue No. 12 Autumn 2006

FUTURE LOOKING GOOD

Bequest

Supporters of the library will recall we reported in the Spring edition of 'Shelf Life' that the Manchester Evening News had reported in December that the library had been named as a beneficiary in will of the late George Matthews.

Subsequent correspondence from the solicitors confirmed this,



George Matthews

but no figure could be reliably quoted to us until inheritance tax and any other outstanding Inland Revenue matters had been resolved. We were, however, told that the other principle beneficiary was the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and that after the deduction of some individual inheritances we would share the remainder of the estate equally with CND.

After a long anticipatory wait the inheritance from George's estate has finally arrived. You cannot image how shocked we were

when the figure of £298,000 leapt out at us from the letter of confirmation.

It was totally out of the blue, but means that, along with the £20,000 recently left by the late David Gerard, the financial future of the library is reasonably secure. Our eternal thanks to George and David for providing the financial foundation on which the future of the library can be built.

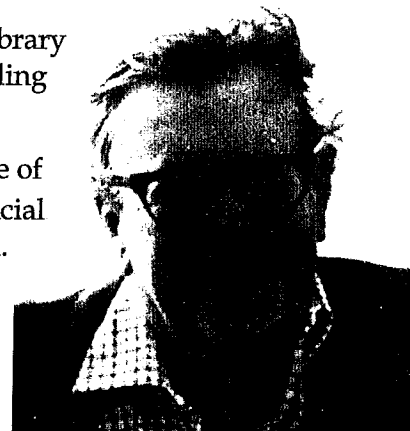
This combined inheritance of £318,000 could, however, give a false sense of security and give an impression to friends and supporters that our financial worries are over and that the fund raising drive can now be relaxed. Nothing could be further from the truth. With an annual budget of over £70,000 our good fortune will soon be exhausted if other donations start to dry up. It has to be our security, not our revenue income.

We know that friends will understand this and continue to build on the already fabulous support we are getting so that before too long the headline will change from 'Future Looking Good' to 'Future of the Library Secured'

Lease

Concluding a lease agreement with the City Council is proving to be a long process. There are still one or two bits of detail that need to be ironed out before things are finally sealed and delivered. But the essence is that the library will have a 30 year lease on Jubilee House at a peppercorn rent with an annual grant from the City Council settling down at around £30,000 a year.

It has been quite a worrying time with all the uncertainty about what the future held following Salford's decision to stop running the library. Now that we are getting on our feet, growing accustomed to the challenge, and with the tremendous support of all our friends it could turn out to be the best thing that could have happened to the library.



David Gerard

Revolving Doors

Short but Sweet

In the last edition we reported that Kathy Johnson had been appointed as our new Library Manager, and very pleased we were to have succeeded in attracting her to the job with her track record. Kathy started towards the end of June and our judgement proved to be correct as she hit the ground running with all sorts of ideas and reports about how to cement the future of the library. Unfortunately she soon began to realise that daily travelling from the Wirral during the rush hours was more burdensome than anticipated, and so juggling the amount of travelling time with her domestic life became too much. Regrettably therefore, Kathy has tendered her resignation. She has, however, offered to keep in touch and help with the work she has already started, putting together our next bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. An offer we will not turn down.

We wish Kathy every success for the future and look forward to other contributions from her, albeit as a volunteer in future.

Meet the New Manager

The Trustees acted very quickly after Kathy broke the news and called back for interview two candidates from our last shortlist along with two reserves. We are pleased to report that we have appointed Lynette Cawthra as our new Library Manager.



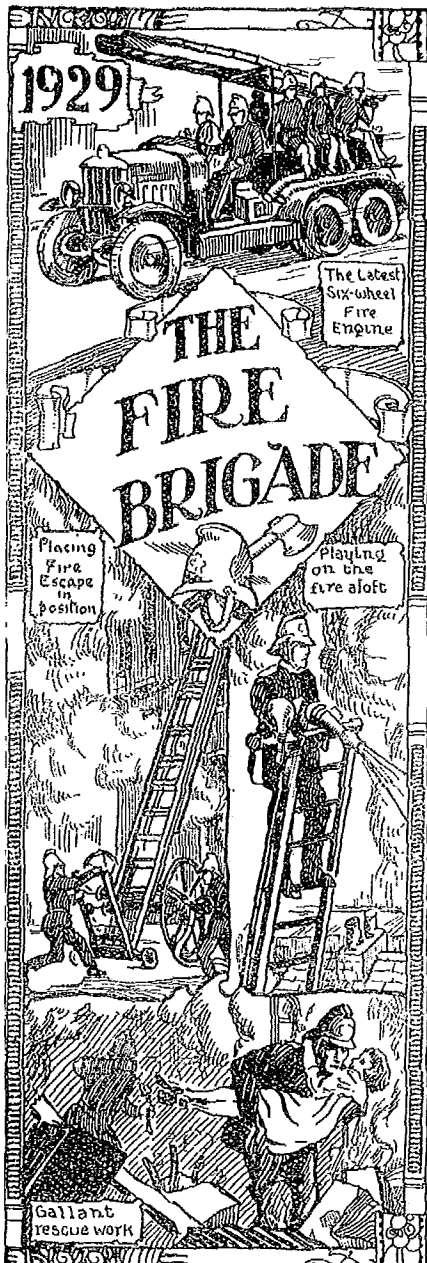
Lynette is presently Information & Library Services Manager with the King's Fund, the better health campaigning charitable foundation. Though based in London, and with a southern accent, Lynette was born and brought up in Manchester and wants to get back closer to her roots. She has worked mainly in voluntary sector libraries and so is very familiar with the problems faced by small libraries. A short spell included working for the former Civil and

Public Services Association where she was responsible for the library and archives. Plenty of those here Lynette. She believes that modern technology, if harnessed properly, can be a fantastic ally in promoting libraries, which is just what we want to do. She will bring with her a wealth of experience and ideas, particularly around the use of information technology, to raise the profile of the library and improve access. Outside work she has, over the years, been heavily involved in community campaigning and is well versed in the art of networking, which, again, will stand the library in good stead. Lynette's contract with King's requires her to give 3 months notice, but it is hoped there will be some flexibility and that she will be able to join us at the beginning of November.



Black History Month

October is Black History Month when, for over 30 years, the achievements of the black community are highlighted and celebrated. There is no doubt that British society has been enriched, both culturally and economically, by the influx of black immigrants over the years, going back well before the arrival of the Windrush. We have material in the library recording the struggles of black and Asian members of the working class and their contribution to society, but it is by no means as extensive as it should be. It is fair to say that the library has a very comprehensive collection of material relating to white working class history but there is a gap which needs to be filled if the collection is to be fully representative. We would particularly like to ask readers for any material, in any form, that will assist us to more completely chronicle black and Asian working class participation in the struggles for a different and better world.



As the General Union of Powerloom Overlookers wind down to move into GMB more of their almanacs, year books, annual reports and negotiated agreements have been deposited in the library by General Secretary, Don Rishton. Friends in the FBU may be interested in this illustration from 1929 depicting the bravery and valour of comrades past.

Another valuable acquisition has been papers of the life long Sheffield activist Bill Moore, including a box file containing papers from the 5th Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions held in 1930 as well as original material from the 1920's National Unemployed Workers Movement. There are also many pamphlets from the First World War to the 1990's and telegrams relating to the 1916 engineering strike over war time pay.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Just when you think you have enough precious new material for one month we receive a phone call from someone who wants to deposit some dentures with us (or so the story goes). Anne and Karl Carter have arrived today with a family heirloom consisting of, not dentures, but amongst other things, the articles of indenture into apprenticeship into the calico printing trade of, one, John Frost in 1690. This has now become the oldest piece in our collection. There is also a record of a 'bounty payment' to the captor of a poor apprentice who had 'legged it' away from his employer. Conditions must have been harsh because the likely punishment for absconding was death.



Mary Barton at the Royal Exchange Theatre Manchester

H The library heritage open days participated in the annual Heritage Open

Days during the first weekend in September. We opened our doors, as it were, on the Saturday and entertained about 50 visitors during the day. Trustees and volunteers were kept busy doing tours and providing refreshments. A very worthwhile effort indeed and showed that there is still plenty of interest in working class history.

Fittingly, the theatre has opened its 30th anniversary season with a production of Mary Barton based on the book by Elizabeth Gaskell about poverty and class differences in the mid 19th century. Thanks to an initiative from the progressive actress Maxine Peake the library mounted an exhibition about life during the period for theatregoers to browse before the play and during the interval. Maxine was good enough to suggest to the play's director, Sarah Frankcom, the potential for a promotional opportunity for the library given the nature of the play and the type of material we have in the collection. The venture has proved very successful and hopefully will be the beginning of a long relation with the theatre.

Trade Union Support

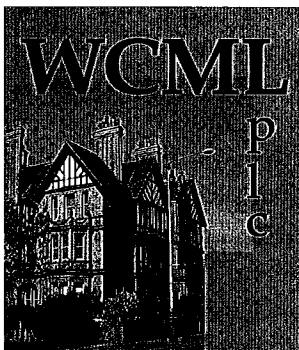


Financial support from trade unions is now becoming a steady, vital, source of income to the library. A combination of standing orders and 'we'll do the same next' year gives us confidence that this will continue well into the future. In the last three months we've had a fantastic £1,000 from one of the smallest unions in the country, the General Union of Loom Overlookers. The not well off trades councils are giving what help they can with contributions this time from Merthyr Tydfil and Hyndburn & Rossendale. The national unions Community and United Road Transport have given further support adding to previous

gifts. Many regions and branches have sent in money, again in alphabetical order, from Amicus, ASLEF, CWU, GMB, NASUWT, T&GWU and UNISON. A grand total of £3,994 has been donated by the movement over the last 3 months. A big thank you to you all.

Of course, trade union support is not limited to finance. Additions to the collection are also regularly received and we would ask unions to particularly bear us in mind when news sheets and campaigning material is printed. Send us a copy.

Last month saw a visit from the Finance Committee of the T&GWU Midlands Region along with the Regional Secretary, Gerard Coyne. We thoroughly enjoyed having them and hope they enjoyed their visit just as much. The region had made a £250 donation last year and repeated it again this year. They wanted to see at first hand just what they were supporting, and we don't think they went away disappointed. Why don't you organise a similar visit to see us, you would be most welcome.



Well, not quite a plc. But, yes, we are now a company limited by guarantee, and if you go to the Companies House web site you can see for yourself. Our company number is 5721140. Unfortunately going through this process has also meant that we have had to wind up the original charitable trust and re-register with the Charity Commission, this time registering the company as a charity. This has now been completed with the new company obviously having the same objectives as the original trust, but,

again, with a new number, as collectors of charity numbers will have noted from the header on page 1. The other knock on effect is that we will have to close down all our old bank accounts and open new ones. This will not effect those making standing order contributions because we'll ensure they just transfer over to the new account.

And finally, all our headed paper will have to be amended to reflect the changes. Never mind, hopefully, it was all worthwhile.

No sooner has the work on one successful Heritage Lottery Fund bid been completed than work starts on putting together the next one. The Trustees want to improve access to the collection and one of the first essentials is for all the material we have in the collection catalogued so



people know what we've got. Most of the books are catalogued and there are lists of some other things on our web site, but that's about it. There is a desperate need to catalogue much of the more unique archives, pamphlets and ephemera. The intention is to install an on line integrated system that will enable a keyword search facility to identify all entries whether it be a book, archive or banner. The bid will be to purchase a system or systems and employ staff to set it up and input the data. We will also be looking to improve our web site and develop the use of the site as an information and educational resource. It is hoped that all the work needed for a successful bid will be completed for a submission by the end of the year.

Shelf Life

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