

Shelf Life

The Newsletter of the Working Class Movement Library

Registered Charity No.1115731



Issue No. 20 Autumn 2008

Work In Progress

This edition of Shelf Life is being put together to the accompaniment of hammering and scraping. The main hall and the NALGO Room are being redecorated, rewired and relit as part of the Library's Heritage Lottery Fund project, 'The Past meets the Present'. The next step will be to design new displays for these areas to welcome visitors. These will include the history of the library from its founding by Eddie and Ruth in the 1950s, and a case where, in a frequently-changing display, volunteers and staff will show off their favourite library item. We're working towards a formal opening of the new-look space early in the New Year.



Another of the exciting new things we're undertaking with the Lottery money is work with

local schools, and this autumn sees the start of our creation of resources to be used in the classroom with Key Stage 2 pupils (that's 7-11 year olds in old money!). We're testing these out with the help of a pilot group of Salford primary schools, who've shown great enthusiasm for the project.



There's a lot happening 'behind the scenes' too in preparation for the unveiling of our new Web site and library/archive online catalogue. We're grateful that at this stage a lot of volunteer energy is going into making these ready to be launched. Anyone who has experience of writing for the Web or a good eye for proof-reading would be a most welcome addition to the volunteer team do get in touch.

Thank You
To



over the next twelve months to help put together exciting displays and examine everything about the image we present to the outside world. Mike will also be giving us some of the tricks of the trade so we can carry on using his experience after he has gone.

One of the skills we could do with more of is the ability to present ourselves and our collection in the most visually attractive way. Hopefully this will be overcome thanks to the Manchester-based solicitors Stocks. They have very generously agreed to sponsor graphic designer, Mike Carter, to work with us



Mike Carter

Our New Cataloguing System

Part of the 'The Past Meets the Present' project is to catalogue the library's varied collection using software called Adlib. It is not just the archives, pamphlets and books that are going to be catalogued but also many of the resources that are currently underused such as the framed pictures, emblems, mugs, badges and banners.



Section from the Adlib online catalogue results screen



For information on how you can help please see overleaf

Adlib has many useful features which will make the resources of the library more accessible through the catalogue. One feature allows us to attach images to catalogue records and we used this recently when we began cataloguing our banners collection. This means when the catalogue is available on our new Web site next year, you will be able to see pictures

of the banners as well as a description. We currently hold 159 banners from various organisations including trade unions, the Communist Party, CND and the International Brigade.

In the future you be able to see these and more items from our cupboards, cellar, attic and walls - from anywhere in the world!



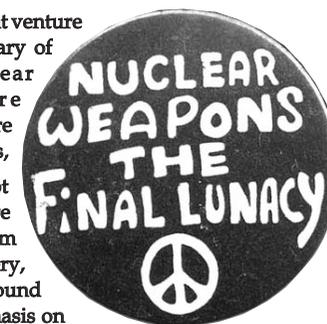
CND's Birthday

Readers will recall that in the last edition of 'Shelf Life' we reported on a joint venture to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. We were optimistic that we could secure funding from the Museums,



Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), but unfortunately this has not come to pass. None the less things will still happen, albeit on a more modest scale. An exhibition titled 'Movements for Peace' will run from mid-November till early January in Salford Museum and Art Gallery, across the road from the library. It will include both visual and sound content reflecting the campaign against nuclear arms, with emphasis on the contribution made by North West activists. We also plan to have workshops led by peace activists exploring the politics of this campaign and the broader issue of conflict resolution.

A competition for school children to design a greetings card for peace will also go ahead as planned.



The Ancoats Brotherhood

The Ancoats Brotherhood was founded by Charles Rowley - an art dealer, philanthropist and local councillor with the aim of bringing art and literature to the working classes. He involved such luminaries of the day as William Morris,



Ford Madox Brown and George Bernard Shaw in giving lectures, with Walter Crane providing designs for the programmes. The Brotherhood didn't just organise lectures, there were concerts, rambles, cycle rides, dances and excursions all of which were advertised in a programme of events that also contained other illustrations and literature of interest to the members of the Brotherhood. Our collection of these programmes date from 1896 to 1920.

So what could a member of the Ancoats Brotherhood get involved in? Well, according to the programme for the 1896/97 winter season there were a series of 19 Sunday afternoon lectures; reading parties on Tuesday evenings and Sunday mornings; an Ambulance Class for men; 6 Victoria University Extension

Lectures; the Toynbee debating society (Saturdays and Thursdays); 5 "At homes" (or dances) and a book stall selling "essential literature". Meanwhile the Spring and Summer 1897 programme boasted 11 rambles and 28 cycling club runs with a Whit Week cycling tour in France. There was also an Easter excursion to Paris. So there was something for everyone. And just in case you were wondering, the Ancoats Brotherhood was open to women as well as men!



Trade Union Support



What a tremendous boost we've had over the last month. In response to a letter we sent him Derek Simpson, joint General Secretary of Unite, very kindly circulated an appeal to all Amicus section branches. The response has been tremendous with 49 branches sending in over £3,000. Nor have we been forgotten by the rest of the movement with donations from various levels of CWU, FBU, GMB, NUJ, UNISON, and two trades councils. The grand total we have received in the last quarter is just over £6,000. Thanks you very much to everyone.

When we put the budget together for this year we made an assumption that we would be able to raise about £34,000 from donations. Perhaps a little bit ambitious our sensible heads were quietly telling us, but thanks to the incredible support we are receiving it looks as though this target will be not only be met but exceeded.

Mikron Theatre Company always put on a good show on their annual visit to the library. And this year was no exception. A packed house in the library annexe thoroughly enjoyed their new production 'Fair Trade' which told the story of the co-operative movement. Whilst recognising that there are many more cooperative enterprises than the local co-op shop the main thrust of the play was about the birth, growth and development of the Co-op from the very first shop



opened by the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society in Toad Lane on 21 December 1844.

From these humble beginnings the movement came to dominate many northern towns with co-operative shops, dairies, halls, funeral parlours and much else. Having survived two wars and the depression the shopping side of the business faced fierce competition in the 1960s from the big chains and began to seem old-fashioned as society changed. The business has since restructured and modernised and is fighting back. The story was told in a series of flashbacks using humour and songs and performed by a very talented cast.



Once again the library participated in the annual national Heritage Open Day event over the weekend of 13-14 September. Despite the slightly chaotic nature of the ground floor due to redecoration the building was made as smart as possible to welcome 60+ visitors over the two days. Many of our guests had never visited the library before and all were very impressed with what they saw. The comment 'We didn't know such a place existed in Salford' was not uncommon. Hopefully once the ground floor renovations are complete and a permanent display area completed we will be able to welcome more casual visitors and such a comment will become a thing of the past.



Wanted - Volunteers. Can You Help?

Although we will have to catalogue some of the collection from scratch, we are also importing into the catalogue many of the lists of papers and pamphlets that have already been created in the past by volunteers. Help will be needed to tidy the lists before they are imported and to add more detail to these records once they have been imported.. As they say, many hands make light work, so if you would like to volunteer to do this, please contact Kate (Project Archivist) Kate.Hart@wcml.org.uk or Jane (Project Librarian) Jane.Taylor@wcml.org.uk

The Trusts Final Accounts

The Trustees report and financial statement for the year 2007-2008 (a legal requirement) has been prepared by our auditors and will be sent to the Charity Commission. If anybody is interested and would like to read it all you have to do is go to the Charity commission web site and type in our charity number in the relevant search bit to find a link to it.