

Dear LARCS

The *Exultation of LARCS**, our community launch of the new Library and Resource Centre (LARC) on 12 November, was a very joyful occasion, presided over by HM The Queen's Representative, The Lord Lieutenant of Devon, Mr David Fursdon, in a full church, the venue made available through the kindness of the Rector and Churchwardens of St Michael's. Thanks so much to all who supported this event and joined in the celebration including Bampton Bell-Ringers, Bampton Cubs, the Tiverton Brass Youth Group and the Rotarian Traffic Control.

All our Special Guests, including LARCS' Patron, Neil Parish MP, the former High Sheriff The Hon John Rous (who visited Bampton at the beginning of our project over two years ago), the Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service's Jim Laker, and Power to Change's Regional Manager, Jenny Sansom, spoke in strong support of LARCS and stayed on to mingle and chat to everyone during the informal part of the proceedings. Having friends in high places is no bad thing!

One of the main aims of the celebration was to publicly acknowledge the grant made by our major funding body, Power to Change. Its Regional Manager, Jenny Sansom, was delighted to see the LARC and the future plans, and also to witness representatives of a wide cross-section of the community celebrating together.

Appropriately for an event in which everyone was to be publicly thanked, it was without cost, as the Mid Devon District Council TAP fund covered the cost of catering (by Acer - 600 delicious pieces and not a one left over!) with sparkling perry provided by an anonymous donor.

I've circulated my Opening Remarks separately. These, and David Botsford's photos, can be found on the Bampton Town Web Site, together with Derek Webster's write-up (also in *Signpost*) of the event on 15 November, when an enthusiastic audience packed into the LARC to hear Sarah Winman, author and actor, in conversation with Judi Thomas. This was a hugely successful evening and again created lots of goodwill and promises for future contacts.

Forthcoming in the LARC will be:

Dogs Helping Kids *Learn to Bond* with Gail and Teazel, at 2 pm on Saturday, 27 November (Gail Laurence: gail.canineessentials@gmail.com or 01398 351501)

a new Mid-Week Coffee and Chat at 10.30 on Wednesday, 30 November (Janet Crabtree: 01398 332883)

Children's Christmas Crafts 10.00 – 12 noon on Saturday, 10 December (Gen Ottaway & Jo Holdom: bluekangaroo@outlook.com).

LARCS is able to offer some computer support (free but donations to LARCS welcome) on Thursday mornings, 10.00 – 12 noon, weekly. There are also computer sessions offered by Age UK on some Wednesdays @ £5 for 50 minutes. Please book ahead for either at the LARC.

Reinstating the book sale (any volume @ 50p! – what a *bargain!*) next week. This has generated some welcome income and demonstrates Bamptonians' eclectic tastes.

Sales of the LARCS' *Bampton Old & New* calendar which represents good value @ £6 – and perhaps an idea for a Christmas present? – and another way of supporting the LARC.

Hosting the Scouts' Christmas post box this year.

The LARCS project depends upon the sterling work of the Volunteer Team in keeping the LARC open and a huge thank you is due to all who have participated. Should you be able to offer a regular couple of hours a week or a fortnight, or on a now and again basis, please contact Mick New on: 07808 344940 micknew@hotmail.co.uk , call in to the LARC, or telephone there on 01398 332466.

As more people become aware the LARC is open for business, the sooner more events and services can be attracted into the building to help it become sustainable. Basic rates for hiring this lovely warm, light and convenient venue will be between £5 per hour (for social service/local community purposes) and £10 per hour (for leisure/pleasure/commercial purposes) day or evening and including week-ends. Further information on hiring opportunities is available from Mick New (contact details as above). Please spread the word!

None of this could have been achieved without the dynamism and sheer hard work of the LARCS' Management Team, to whom I am deeply grateful. LARCS' corporate entity will, inevitably, change its composition down the years, and in 2017 will move forward without my own involvement as a Trustee. I am confident that the project will move forward positively, harnessing the talents, experience and expertise of the Team - and with your support.

I'm now preparing to take up everything in my own life that's been 'on hold' for so long. It has been such a great pleasure and a privilege to have met and worked with many of you during my tenure as Chairman of LARCS, and I thank you most sincerely.

With the very best of winter wishes

Janet

Janet M Crabtree
Chairman, LARCS

LARCS' page on Bampton's web site: bampton.org via the link on library page.
Facebook: www.facebook.com/bamptonlibrarydevon
LARCS' twitter handle is @bampton_larcs

*Please forgive the double pun: the collective noun for larks is an exaltation! JMC