

20 MAY 2011, PASSMORE EDWARDS INSTITUTE GRAND REOPENING

We are fortunate in Hayle to have been one of the recipients of **John Passmore Edwards's** generosity. When the Institute was built in 1896, it was noted that it was **larger than would be expected** for a town the size of Hayle. Perhaps this is because Passmore Edwards's parents and his brother James had moved to Phillack and he had been **a frequent visitor to Hayle** in the 1860s. He was thus well aware of the lack of educational and leisure facilities in Hayle as well as the decline in mining and in industry – **he might recognise Hayle today!**

Punch magazine in 1893, **the year our foundation stone was laid**, composed this poem:

Oh **Passmore Edwards**, you beyond contention
Are worthy of Punch's '**Honourable Mention**'
Wherever there may be boons a brewing
You're very sure, sir, **to be up and doing**.
There is scarce a project schemed with kindly sense
But profits from **your munificence**.
Punch won't forget to pray when **passing bedwards**
For you -and for more bricks **like Passmore Edwards**

In 2007 the Institute was in **a bad way**. The roof was leaking and the inside of the building was damp. **Repairs and repainting were futile** as the damp caused the paint to peel and flake as soon as it was done. Income was falling as the building was not an attractive venue. One of our major rooms was used as a snooker room and the **windows were blackened** - which mercifully made it **harder to see the mould** on the walls but made the outside of the building ugly.

In 2007, after initially refusing a Townscape Heritage Initiative grant because we couldn't meet the 40% matching requirements, we found a way to focus on the repair and renovation of the roof and gutters and **we were just able to raise the funds**. Stuart Meigh of JS Roofing did a marvellous job and within weeks the building started to dry out. New members were recruited to the management committee, **and things started to look up**.

An early project was the restoration of the room behind me, named the Denis Hollow Room in honour of the six decades of service given by Denis to the building. We dug up the concrete crudely placed on the floor, installed new wood block flooring, repaired and restored the flaking plaster, restored the plaster moulding, buried cables, dipped and restored the wainscoting and **managed to spend £15,000** when we had originally estimated £5,000. The Silvanus Trevail Room followed - and ugly white paint on the wainscoting was removed and the woodwork restored to its original state. **All of the rooms have now been painted and decorated** – although we always have more to do.

Our last major job is the repair and restoration of the lovely Victorian tiles in the entrance way and repair and protection of the beautiful stained glass work in the entrance portico. **I can feel a grant application coming on.**

But our main purpose today is to say **‘thank you’**.

‘Thank you’ to **Passmore Edwards** for giving Hayle such a wonderful Village Hall which continues to benefit thousands of people each year. And ‘thank you’ to the **many people and organisations** who have contributed with time and money to restoring the building.

Let’s start with Hayle’s **Townscape Heritage Initiative** which got our whole restoration going at the end of 2007. Thanks to a £36,000 grant, matched by £24,000 from our own resources (totally depleting them in the process), we were able to repair and renovate the **108 year old roof and gutters**. Initially we had been offered a grant of £96,000 which we would have had to match with £66,000 – totally out of the realm of possibility. But we were able to persuade the THI funders that the **roof was a project on its own** and that we had a ten-year plan to do the rest of the work. The THI team consisted of the Heritage Lottery Fund, the European Union and Objective One, the South West of England Regional Development Agency, English Heritage, Penwith District Council, Cornwall County Council and Hayle Town Council – and we are **extremely grateful** to them for putting their trust in us.

Strangely, though, there was **nothing to show for all of this work** as no one could see the roof. The users did not see any changes, income did not improve and our resources were completely depleted. But we had a dry building and a **secure base on which to build**. We did whatever we could out of our meagre

room hire income but spent a lot of time seeking additional grants to move ahead with our ten-year plan. **Hayle Town Council was the first** to come to our aid with £2,000 which seemed like a miracle. The Cooperative Membership plan followed with £1,000 and the Town Council again with another £1,000. By the end of 2008 we had received nearly £48,000 in grants including £3,800 from Penwith District Council, £1,000 from County Councillor Terry Lello, £1,000 from the Hayle Area Plan Partnership and £4,000 from the Cornwall Rural Community Council. During 2009 we got on with the work but by 2010 we were back applying for grants and received £3,000 from the Garfield Weston Foundation and smaller donations from the Lions, Rotary, Church on the Rock and individual donors. **Esme Jelbert**, our tireless Building Manager, was also raising money through table top sales, auctions, Christmas Fayres and **threats**.

To our delight, in September 2010, we received a grant of £14,811 from the West Cornwall Local Action Group to restore the Victorian Lantern - as originally designed by the architect Silvanus Trevail. This enabled us to remove the **lead-covered structure** that was installed following the loss of the original lantern in a storm and which cut off the light to the stair well making the building **dark and gloomy**. I think you will agree that this is a wonderful feature of the building. And thanks to Cornwall Council, Zoe McAden, Penny Stokes and Jeremy Content for helping us to get the appropriate **planning permissions** through expeditiously.

With our most recent donation of £2,000 from the Cooperative Membership fund, we have **come off life support**, paid back the loans made by trustees and our **bank balance is just in the black**. Room incomes are now running at over double those before the work commenced and we are receiving nothing but expressions of delight at how our building looks. I hope you will take the opportunity to look around – and agree.

Before we do our **Grand Reopening** I would like to offer mention our trustees whose hard work has got us to this point. These are:

- Our chairman, Terry Pinnington
- Our vice chairman, Denis Hollow (who was a personal friend of Passmore Edwards)

- Our secretary and Building Manager, Esme Jelbert (daughter of Denis Hollow and continuing the dynasty) who has loved the building to bits and was named Citizen of the Year for her efforts,
- Tim Clarke
- Bill Glanville
- Frank Goff, our historic restoration expert
- Robb Lello
- Bob Mims
- Jayne Ninnes
- Richard Selby-Boothroyd and
- Ray Wyse who helped to install the banner and the exhibition amongst many projects he does for the town.

And our gratitude, too, to **Harvey's Foundry Trust**, their chairman John Pollard and their director Laura Christon, for their support and for funding the exhibition and the **Hayle Archive** for researching the materials and for providing photographs and for their researcher **Susan Barney** who discovered lots of interesting information and designed the exhibition and banner – and to all our workmen, volunteers, room hirers, friends and supporters whose love of this building has helped to support it.

To summarise: over four years we have received £70,000 in grants, raised £10,000 through fundraising, used £25,000 of our savings and £25,000 from room hire income to enable us to spend £130,000 on renovations. We are extremely proud to have preserved Passmore Edwards's legacy for generations to come.

And now by waving the trowel used by our benefactor to lay the foundation stone, it is now my pleasure to invite our special guest, **John Passmore Edwards** to reopen the building.

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Please join us for refreshments and take some time to look around the building.

Thank you.