

The Monica Edwards Appreciation Society
71 Brownrigg Crescent
Bracknell
Berkshire RG12 2PY



August 2017

Dear M*E*A*S Member

We are writing to let you know that after much thought and consideration we have reluctantly decided to close the Monica Edwards Appreciation Society.

M*E*A*S was formed 10 years ago by Sue Winn and Joyce Bailey to raise awareness of the author Monica Edwards and her work. We also wanted to put readers in touch with each other, bring members together at events and to share our experiences of Monica Edwards' wonderful writing and its influences on our lives. We are pleased that through M*E*A*S so many of us have forged lasting friendships and speaking personally, we have each gained so much from our involvement in the society, meeting everyone and reading the fantastic writing contributed to the Martello magazine.

We are obviously very sad about having to do this but we hope that once you have read our reasons detailed below you will understand why we are taking this step.

Membership currently stands at 70, down from its peak of 100 a few years ago. The membership fee is £7.50 per address and runs from 1st August to 31st July each year. This fee pays for producing and posting the society magazine, the Martello and covers some of the expenditure incurred in running the yearly events. Of the 70 registered members there are 29 members who have renewed their membership until 31st July 2017 and 32 who did not renew in 2016, of those 32 there are a few who did not renew in 2015. (The remaining nine, including Sue Winn and Joyce Bailey, are honorary members.)

Three new members joined in 2016 and so far, one new member in 2017.

With more non-paying than paying members and a reduction in new members joining the society we have had to be realistic and face the fact that we cannot continue to run it or produce the magazine with less and less funds to cover rising postage and printing costs. We also think it is not fair that members who have diligently renewed each year have subsidised those who did not renew and we cannot let this trend continue.

As you know, we depend on contributions from members to the society magazine, the Martello. The magazine is something we can all be very proud of; it has featured excellent writing, photographs and illustrations in all issues over 10 years. However, there has been a sharp fall off in contributions over the last few years which means that we have not been able to publish as many editions of the Martello as we originally intended. However, there will still be the 10 years 'special' edition later this year with possibly one more print edition of the Martello after that to round things off and to use up any remaining funds. We would of course be more than happy to receive any contributions of articles/poems/photos for these final issues.

We are so sorry to bring our 10 years of M*E*A*S to a close but we really do hope you will understand why we have made this decision.

Later this year we will be setting up a Monica Edwards Appreciation Group (M.E.A.G) on Facebook. This will be only for current and past members of M*E*A*S i.e. it will be a 'closed group'. We think it will be the best way of keeping in touch; anyone can also organise get-togethers/walks/events amongst ourselves in an informal way via FB. And of course, there will be no subscription fee. More details of this venture will follow. We understand that not everyone is a Facebook member but we are sure we can still keep in touch with those not on Facebook through email or by post

Finally, we are very apologetic to recently joined members who we are sure will be very disappointed to receive this letter. Any new member whose cheque we have cashed will be refunded. Existing members: please do not renew your membership in August but we will of course return any cheques sent to us before this letter is sent out.

Best Wishes

Yours sincerely

Joyce Bailey Sue Winn

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