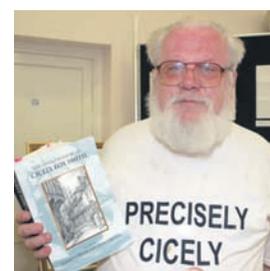


# Legacy of author and poet, Cicely, remembered



Performer, Tom Lewis, who performed during the concert. AQ 4121



Wearing his "Precisely Cicely" sweatshirt at the event, co-author of the Complete Poetry of Cicely Fox Smith, is Jim Saville. AQ 4104

A WELL-LOVED author and poet who spent her latter years living at West Halse, Bow, was remembered by hundreds of people who went along to the village for a special commemoration.

Cicely Fox Smith was born in Lymm, Cheshire in 1882, but settled in Hampshire after the First World War.

She was a prolific in the works she created, which have long been a source for folk performers.

Nowhere in Bow was she commemorated as a writer until a special day was held in the village last month to mark her significant contribution.

Cicely left a legacy of books and 650 poems that capture the essence of the last years of the 19th century and the first years of the 20th century.

Her name, she said, should be pronounced "Cicely as in precisely".

A concert was held in Bow on June 21 to celebrate her life and work to mark 60 years since her death on April 8, 1954.

Her poems, particularly those covering the age of sail and horse, have been an inspiration to folk singers who have adapted her work, adding tunes to her poems to create songs evocative of this golden age.

The concert featured these songs and readings of Cicely's poems.

Performers included Martyn Wyndham-Read, Tom Lewis, Peter and Barbara Snape, Moira Craig, Joyce and Danny Mcleod, Bill Wilkes and Jim Saville, *Shake a Leg* Jackie Wil-

liams, other singers from around the country and local singers from the South West, including a local resident who read the dialect poem *The Old Cob Wall*.

Prior to the concert, there were events to celebrate her life and a commemorative stone at Cicely's grave was unveiled in the churchyard at Nymet Tracey.

More than 100 people attended the open-air service and the blessing and unveiling of the new memorial stone.

The service was conducted by the Rev Canon Anthony Geering.

It also included song and readings of poetry as well as prayers and a sermon and "clipping" the churchyard, an old Devon and Somerset custom.

Also that day there was a guided walk, afternoon tea and a discussion forum.

Mike Warman, one of the organisers of the "Celebrating Cicely Day" explained: "Her work is not as widely read and known as she might deserve!"

"She wrote about the sea and it is mainly these poems which have been set to music and are widely sung in the UK, US and Australia.

"Somehow this well educated young lady managed to travel and to familiarise herself with the lingo of sailortown - at least one of her contemporaries did not believe she was a woman!"

"She published under the name of C F Smith and she was quite a character - speeding round the Devon lanes in her Morris Minor. "She and her sister

helped the war effort by turning one of their rooms into a collar production factory - not really sure what that means!"

He added that one of her poems about World War One is called *Homeward* - memories of home and life on the farm with the horses.

The Cicely Fox Day project was initiated by four folk friends from Devon and Cornwall, Mike Warman, Sylvia Watts and Dick and Melanie Henrywood. Dick and Melanie live in Bow.

Melanie said: "It was a brilliant day - superb weather, magical graveside ceremony, fantastic concert and memorable singaround."

"Thank you' so much to everyone for your good wishes, support and generosity throughout this entire project."

A 52-page souvenir booklet *Celebrating Cicely*, was published to mark the occasion and was for sale at a cost of just £4.

A few copies of the booklet are still available, which includes CFS biographical and bibliographical detail, as well as local first-hand interviews from Bow residents who remember Cicely and her sister, and a selection of Cicely's work, setting her words to music, etc.

A DVD and CD of the celebrations and about Cicely is being professionally produced.

Further details about Cicely and the "Celebrating Cicely" day can be found on the website: [www.cicelyfoxsmith.org.uk](http://www.cicelyfoxsmith.org.uk)

Alan Quick



Barbara and Peter Snape were guest performers at the commemorative concert. AQ 4106



Danny McLeod, who hosted a discussion forum with one of the event organisers, Sylvia Watts. AQ 4101



Josie Sanders (11), who lives at West Halse, Bow, placed flowers on the grave during the church service. AQ 4073



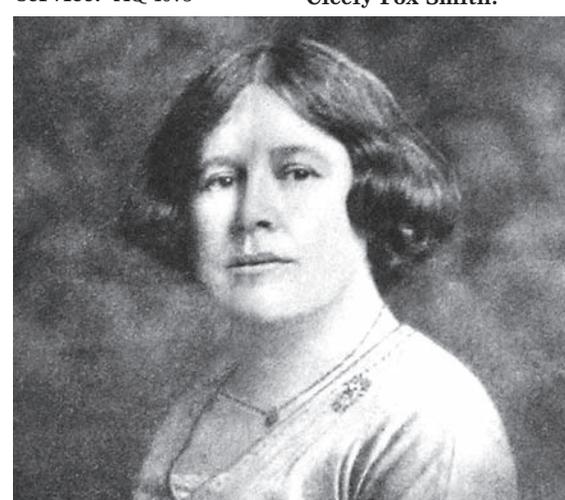
Cicely Fox Smith.



The new memorial stone on the grave of Cicely Fox Smith, centre, with some of those who took part in the service, from left, Mick Richards, Viv Steer, Dick and Melanie Henrywood, Mike Warman, Josie Sanders, Sylvia Watts, Rev Canon Anthony Geering and two of the Bow Church choristers. AQ 4079



During the "clipping" the churchyard, an old Devon and Somerset custom. AQ 4066



Cicely Fox Smith.

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 (profits in aid of Lapford Community Year 6)

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**MAIN OFFICE:**  
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 Published by the Crediton Country Courier Ltd, 102 High Street, Crediton EX17 3LF.  
 Printed at Newsquest Southern Print Centre, Test Lane, Redbridge, Southampton, SO16 9JX