

VILLAGE LIBRARY CENTRE

Lewes County Library, originally started the Rural Libraries Scheme in 1924 under the Powers Act 1919, Public Libraries. Up to then there had been 170 Public Libraries Provision for rural areas of the county.

The first County Librarian was Mr. H. Wilson; he took up his post on September 1st 1924 at an annual salary of £300. His task in East Sussex requiring much determination as initially he had only one assistant.

80 Library centres were established in small towns and villages across the county. In March 1927 the stock of books had risen to 16,000 and the number of centres to 137

As the years went by the Library Centres increased in the villages, most run by voluntary librarians. These were held in schools, or peoples houses

During the war Sedlescombe's centre was in the school and some years later in "Sherrald" in the centre of the village run by Mrs. Thorpe. By this time Mr. R. Rowsell was Mr. Wilson's deputy.

In 1953 the late Mrs Hoddon and myself brought the Library up to the Village Hall, we had 2 boxes of fiction and 1 non-fiction, this centre grew at a great pace until we had 14 boxes which took up a lot of space and were also very heavy to move each time.

In the meantime Mr. Wilson retired in 1961 and Mr. Rowsell succeeded as Head Librarian and Mr. John Saunders became his deputy. It was Mr. Rowsell who replaced the boxes with library shelves on which to keep the books.

The library centre improved as the years went by and the boxes were replaced by a library van bringing books to be exchanged every two months, these we chose for ourselves and we had a very good selection of books.

In 1973 Mr. Rowsell retired which we were very sorry about, he had, like Mr. Wilson done a lot for small libraries. Mr. Allan replaced him and his idea was to replace the centres with a van coming around every two weeks, quite a few centres closed.

In Sedlescombe we fought hard for ours and up to this day, there are still 14 village library centres in use. After a long fight we now get our quota of new books and are still giving the village a good service. We issue about 80-100 books most Tuesday afternoons and we are always there to open up at 1.45 pm until 3.45 pm. We have fiction, non-fiction, large prints and childrens books.

Jeanne Sellers