



50 Years at Tredyffrin Public Library

The Tredyffrin Public Library in Strafford is pleased to welcome its new director Chris Kibler as it celebrates its 50th birthday in 2016.

The Society held three very successful public meetings at the library during the fall of 2015, and is pleased to be able to do so again in the fall of 2016.

Of particular note is the Local History room, in which you can find the faded but venerable “New Centerville” sign from the station building on the Chester Valley Railroad, on long-term loan from the Society’s archive. This same sign can be seen in some of the historic photos in this issue.

— *John O. Senior*



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The Tredyffrin Public Library was established in 1966, with John Tucker named as the head librarian. In the summer of 1967, the library moved to the old Strafford School building, located at Upper Gulph and West Valley roads where Woodlynde School now stands. There, Tredyffrin Public Library became the largest community library in Chester County.

The old Strafford School building, built in 1885, was less than ideal. Pigeons roosted in the attic and bees built a hive—complete with dripping honey in the walls. Circulation staff conducted business in a freezing lower hallway, while the rest of the staff sweltered above. The weight of books on the old structure became a concern. Library Director Marian Stevens (who took over for Mr. Tucker in 1971), along with the library board, developed a long-range plan for Tredyffrin Public Library and searched for a more satisfying location. Several sites were reviewed including property in Chesterbrook.

On December 3, 1973, with a nod from the Tredyffrin Township Supervisors, Strafford Park was chosen as the best available option. Six architectural firms were invited to bid, and a majority of the architectural selection committee favored Mitchell/Giurgola Architects. In June 1974, the committee made its recommendation and hired the award-winning Philadelphia firm. On May 10, 1975 a formal groundbreaking took place; and a year and a half of construction ensued before the doors of the new Tredyffrin Public Library opened in October of 1976. Books were transported in cars and station wagons and put on the shelves by volunteers. Tredyffrin Public Library is listed on the Great Buildings website, www.greatbuildings.com, one of only 22 recognized sites in Pennsylvania.

In 1980, Paoli Library became a branch of Tredyffrin Public Library. Both libraries are part of the Chester County Library System, through which it is even more possible to offer a wide scope of information and service to the public. As the Tredyffrin community continued to grow, Tredyffrin Public Library underwent yet another construction event in 1990 when a new Children’s Library was created on the lower level in previously unfinished space. The library’s commitment to an ever-changing community continued when plans were finalized in 2004 to renovate and expand the entire Tredyffrin Public Library. In September 2007, Tredyffrin Public Library broke ground for its \$6 million renovation and expansion. Hundreds attended the festive groundbreaking celebration, which featured live music, children’s entertainment, book signings with local authors and more.

In January 2008, Marian Stevens retired after 37 years, and the following April Joseph Sherwood replaced her as director of the ever-growing community treasure. The library remained open through much of construction, shifting services and materials from one side of the building to the other and setting up temporary offices to accommodate the construction. On January 31, 2009, the entire expanded building was open to the public for the first time. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held and retired Director Marian Stevens and Director Joseph Sherwood cut the ribbon. A month of events for donors, adults, teens and children ensued with robust attendance and generous coverage by the local newspaper *Suburban and Wayne Times*.

In 2012, Joseph Sherwood became executive director of the Chester County Library System and Michael Packard became the director of Tredyffrin Township Libraries. Christopher Kibler was announced as the new director of Tredyffrin Township Libraries in late 2015. He began his tenure in January 2016, just in time to help celebrate the library’s 50th anniversary. — *From the History page of the Tredyffrin Public Library website*