

Autumn 2013

The contractors have departed and we now start the job of restoring the original part of the library back to its former glory and getting the new extension up and running. Not a simple task but one that the staff, committee and volunteers look forward to. As you know the last 16 months have been somewhat hectic for all concerned and I am so grateful to everyone for their patience and understanding. Many of the dates we published regarding closure of rooms, activities, etc. had to be extended/changed, some at short notice, but at least, with the goodwill of all, we were able to continue to function. A similar library to ours has recently given notice to its members that it will be closing for two years while it undergoes refurbishment. Throughout the building of the extension we have had an excellent working relationship with all those involved – Cornwall Council, TEC Construction Ltd, Service Design Solution Ltd and Poynton Bradbury Wynter of St. Ives to name but a few.

Our priority is to get the old part of the library functioning and then, at a sensible pace, absorb the extension into the system. It is not a case of all hands to the pumps because we must ensure that all our books go back on the shelves in the right order so it means small teams of people working under those who know the cataloging system. We still have to absorb the late Dr. Eric Richards' book collection from storage as well as the newspaper collection that was saved from the basement of the Cornishman offices when they moved last year. The Winter lectures etc. have been missed but they will shortly start again (see enclosed programme). Such activities are an important part of the library both financially and socially. Although the weather did its best to scupper the Summer Fete we went ahead, unfortunately mainly indoors without the Friends of the Morrab Gardens. We still managed to raise just over £1,000. A marvellous effort by all concerned.

It will take several months to organize the extension but priority will be given to moving the photographic archive from their cramped room so that work can start in transforming the latter into the new poetry room. We are delighted that Tom Goskar, one of our members, has volunteered to help the photographic archive team create a new database (Omeka) for the collection as well as setting up the equipment for digitizing the photographs themselves. Tom's professional background is in archaeology and for many years he has worked with digital data in the heritage sector. Omeka, an easy to use system, was developed for galleries, libraries, archives and museums and it will enable scanned photographs and records to be searched and viewed on a computer in a visually appealing way. Working in conjunction with Tom are Helen Kestle and Katie Lennon who are revamping and updating our website (www.morrablibrary.org.uk). Exciting times ahead and we will keep you all informed of developments.

Those of you who have recently visited the library will have noticed that we now have seven car parking spaces instead of the original three. The seven in question are to the right and left of the main entrance and are marked as ours. Our old parking spaces, located across from the main entrance, have now been allocated to the Care Centre located behind the library. These extra spaces will be of great benefit not only to our disabled members but also to our volunteers who give so much of their time to the library.

Following the death of the 4th Lord St. Levan we invited his nephew, James St. Aubyn, the 5th Lord St. Levan to be one of our patrons. We are delighted that he has accepted thus continuing the long family association with the Morrab Library. Since the AGM we have co-opted two members onto the committee – Andrew Symons and Sue Nebesnuick.

In June we started to receive the promised monthly income from the Dennis Myner Trust and this, as expected, has transformed our financial situation. However, with anticipated expenditure such as furniture, fittings, computers etc. and the unknown costs of operating our lift, heating etc. it will take about a year for our finances to stabilize. With this in mind we have formed a financial sub-committee consisting of your Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer to oversee our finances and report to the committee on a monthly basis. With caution in mind we have changed our portfolio from

income to growth that will restore it to its 2011 value. Our Treasurer is at present revising the monthly financial statement so that it will show additional information and will be easier to understand. In keeping with the wishes of the late Dennis Myner the annual subscription will be reduced from £27 to £25 with effect from the 1st of January 2014. Life membership, which has remained static for a number of years, will increase from the same date to £500 (£250 for over 60s). The Friends of the Morrab scheme continues and participation is encouraged. Details are available on request.

We will host our book and postcard fair in St. John's Hall, Penzance on Saturday 21st September from 10am until 4pm. Do please find time to visit this well-established and popular event that is frequented by many booksellers and dealers from throughout the South West. Light refreshments will be available.

The official handing over of the extension, in front of invited guests, will take place on Monday 2nd December at 1130am and will give us the opportunity to thank all those who have been involved with the extension. At the request of the late Dennis Myner the extension will be accepted on behalf of the library by Annabelle who, as you may be aware, is now The Keeper of Books (Gwithyades Lyvrow) having been made a Bard. A fitting title indeed. On the following Saturday (7th) we will hold our annual Christmas party from 10am until 12.30pm when the new extension will be fully open to all members and be included in the normal Friday weekly tour.

Kindest regards

Bob Harrison,
Chairman