

MORRAB LIBRARY

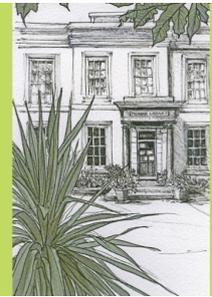
Morrab Gardens, Penzance, TR18 4DA

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President: Michael Grandage CBE Patrons: Lord St. Levan, John le Carré

FOUNDED 1818

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Newsletter – Autumn 2018

Greetings from the new Librarian

I took over Annabelle's very large shoes on the 9th May, and am slowly learning about the delights and challenges of this unique Library and its incredible collections. I've encountered two major floods, alongside some minor building challenges; my colleagues and I have secured a grant from the National Archives (more below); and welcomed new collections into our library. But it is the hugely warm and wonderful welcome I have received from you all that is uppermost in my mind. To all the members, volunteers and Trustees I have been fortunate to meet so far, I cannot thank you enough for making me feel so welcome and supported. I promise I will do all I can to ensure the library retains all of its charm, character and friendly environment, whilst looking for ways to take the library forward through increased membership, new technology and other innovations, to ensure our members continue to enjoy this remarkable resource.

Our new President

We warmly welcome the new President of the Morrab Library, Michael Grandage, CBE. Michael is a producer and director who lives and works in Penzance. He runs his own highly successful international company (MGC) directing theatre and film in the UK and the US. Morrab Library has been part of his life since he was a child - he walked past it every day on his way to Humphry Davy Grammar School. There will be various opportunities to meet Michael in the coming months. Michael has taken over from A.N. Wilson who served as our President for many years and to whom we thank for his enduring support for the Library.

A new collection

The Library recently received the generous gift of an important library collection from the Hypatia Trust. The Elizabeth Treffry Collection, named after the 15th century heroine who repelled French invaders in Fowey, is a remarkable collection of books, manuscripts and archives. The 'Secretary's Room' which has been beautifully decorated and restored, now houses the new collections. Our thanks go to Melissa Hardie who gifted the collection and to the team at the Hypatia Trust who worked so hard to prepare for the handover.

Water, water everywhere!

One flood is unlucky - but two? The Morrab Library has been testing its luck of late, with two serious floods within two months of each other. The first was thanks to seagulls nesting on the roof (and work has been undertaken to ensure this cannot happen again), which caused some damage to God's Room, but more substantial damage to the Jenner Room below. By some miracle, the Cornish collections were largely undamaged, but we have needed to replace the Grade II listed ceiling and floor. Work is now complete and the collections are now safely restored. Our second flood was due to a faulty pipe in the downstairs loo. This sent a lot of water down into the basement area, where our archives are stored. Again, the Gods were smiling on us, and despite extensive damage to the ceiling, and a small ocean of water collecting in the lift well, the collections were spared. Enormous thanks go to all the staff and volunteers who helped in ensuring the safety of the collections, and who assisted in the mopping up and refurbishing of the rooms.

Bicentenary celebrations

We have enjoyed a wonderful and successful Bicentenary year, with a variety of events including lectures, music, story-telling, workshops, book launches, tours and poetry. The Library has welcomed a large number of members and many new visitors to the library at these celebration events and enhanced our reputation and recognition throughout the area. We are so grateful for all of your support at these events. We are finishing our Bicentenary year in style. A list of the upcoming events for the rest of this year can be found at the end of the newsletter. Please do let us know if you would like to attend any.

There are two particular celebrations to draw your attention to. The first is the thank you tea for our extraordinary volunteers. It's the chance for the library staff and Committee to say enormous thanks for all the work and time you give us. Our President Michael Grandage will be in attendance to take the opportunity to meet you all. The tea starts at 2.00pm on Saturday 24th November. The second event is the Library Christmas party, to be held from 6.30 – 8.30pm on Friday 7th December. With music from the Buccas Four, and the presentation of the Library Commemorative Book made by Steph Haxton and Sue Lewington, you'll be sure of a wonderful evening.

A grant from the National Archives

We were delighted to receive a grant from the National Archives to engage a qualified Archivist to visit and review our historic and important Archival collections. The Archives Revealed Scoping Survey grant will allow the library to create plans for the development of the collections, prepare for further work on archive material, and open up new research possibilities for new audiences.

Volunteers

We have bade farewell and welcomed many new volunteers to the library in the last few months. As always, we are ever grateful to them all for the time, skills, commitment and support they give us. Without our volunteers, the doors to the library could not open.

Our three Arts Society (formerly NADFAS) volunteers continue to clean and repair the modern book collection in the library – a real Forth Bridge operation, where as soon as they have completed their task, they go straight back to the beginning and start again! We are grateful for their commitment and enthusiasm.

The Photo Archive

Our Photo Archive volunteers continue to digitise the extensive photo collections, at a great rate. At last count close to 9,000 images have been digitised, and these are all available to see on the website at: <http://photoarchive.morrablibrary.org.uk/> We thank the Dennis G C Myner Charitable Trust for their continued support in bringing these collections to the public eye and making them accessible to all. The Trust was set up by the late Dennis Myner to support the Library into the future. Mr Myner cared deeply about the Library. He spent his retirement painting copies of photographs held in the Photographic Archive, whilst at the same time fighting the local authorities to gain permission to build the Library's extension. The Dennis Myner Trust paid for the extension and its fitting out, and continues to provide a regular income for the Library from the interest on the Trust's funds which came from the estate of Mr Myner.

Overall, Morrab Library is grateful for this essential funding which covers 50% of our outgoings, and we would not be able to exist without them. The Management Committee meet regularly with the Trustees of the Dennis Myner Trust to keep them informed about the Library.

Clean up Day - 1st December

The Library needs to undertake a substantial clear up of the spaces around its perimeter. This requires clearing drains and gutters, and cutting back encroaching vegetation around the base of the building. We have set a date of Saturday 1st December – if you have some time and would be willing to help us with this working bee, please contact the library for more information.

Pop Up Shop

A big thank you to members who manned the pop-up shop on the high street this month. As in March, it once again proved very successful welcoming many visitors and new members, and raising valuable funds.

Foxe's Book of Martyrs

Members will be aware of a recent event to raise money towards the conservation of our precious 1576 edition of John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. Extensively damaged, it requires a large investment to undertake conservation work on the volume itself, but I am very happy to report that we have raised enough to date to be able to commission a conservation-grade storage box for the volume, which will protect it and mitigate any further deterioration and damage. The Library will continue to raise funds to preserve the volume itself, alongside other priorities.

A sad loss: Jessica Mann

We were saddened to learn of the death of Jessica Mann, a long-time supporter of the Library and friend to many. Jessica was a prolific writer of crime novels and reviewed them for the Literary Review. A thoughtful feminist, she was a hard-working Trustee of the Library and donated many books to the Morrab's collections.

Membership

In 2018, we have welcomed 197 new members to the library to date, a testament to our sustained relevance in this modern world.

We will be in touch again in January to remind you that annual subscriptions will be due. If you'd like to pay by Standing Order, forms are available from library staff.

Committee News

Comings and goings

In the last few months, we have also welcomed a number of new Committee Members, as well as a new Chairman, Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary. They are making an invaluable contribution, as are all our Trustees, to ensuring the Library is managed efficiently and effectively, adhering to Charity Commission guidelines. We have also bid farewell to our former Chair Mark Penrose, and Trustees Les Gillard and Dave Tigwell.

Call for help

The Management Committee are planning to establish a funding group to research and make applications to grant giving bodies. This is important as we seek dedicated funding for specific projects to move the library forward. So if anyone out there has skills in this area and is prepared to put them at the service of the library we'd be very keen to hear from you. And, of course, if anyone is interested in helping to run the library by becoming a Trustee at some point please also let the committee know.

Annual General Meeting

The date is set for next year's Annual General Meeting – it will be held on Monday 4th March 2019, venue to be confirmed. We will pass on more information about this meeting in the coming months.

Lisa Di Tommaso
Librarian
October 2018

Upcoming events at the Morrab Library

Saturday 1st November, 1.30pm

Talk: Artist and Subject. A talk by our 2018 artist-in-residence John Trigg using books from our own collections to describe the history of the relationship between artist and subject. Free, all welcome.

Saturday 10th November, 10am - 3pm

Christmas Craft Fair - Local makers and artists gather at the library for our annual craft fair - all your Christmas shopping needs catered for. A few spaces left - if you'd like to run a stall, please get in touch.

Wednesday 14th November, 2pm

Talk: Join local author Victoria Osborne-Broad as she talks about and reads excerpts from her latest novel *Chalice of the Rainbow*.

Saturday 17th November, 7.30pm

Concert: Penzance Orchestral Society's Autumn Concert, themed to celebrate the Library's Bicentenary. Featuring Beethoven's Coriolan Overture and Schubert's Symphony No 6 (which dates from the year of the library's foundation) and mezzo soprano Charlotte Collier performing Mahler's orchestral song cycle Rückert-Lieder. The concert will be held at Penwith College Auditorium, Tickets £10, available from Penzance Orchestral Society (please see website for details).

Wednesday 21st November, 2pm

Sydney, Where Art Thou? : a celebration marking the centenary of the life and work of the poet W.S. Graham, who spent most of his life in West Cornwall. His poems will be introduced by John Butterworth and read by John Truscott.

Saturday 24th November, 2pm

Thank you event for library volunteers. An invitation to all of our wonderful volunteers to gather together for drinks and nibbles as the President, Chairman, Committee and staff give grateful thanks for all the hard work and time devoted to the library.

Saturday 1st December, 10am - 3pm

Library Working Bee. Calling all volunteers to lend a hand in clearing the library building perimeter and drains, removing leaves, foliage and debris, ready for winter.

Saturday 1st December, 11am

Book Launch: Trina Beckett, local writer, launching her new book *Wives of the War Generals*.

Friday 7th December, 6.30 - 8.30pm

Christmas Party with carols performed by the Buccas Four. There will also be a presentation of the Library Commemorative book by Sue Lewington and Steph Haxton. As well as plenty of festive cheer!

Saturday 8th December, 10am – 1pm

Ukulele Morning: Join music teacher Michaela Smith as she hosts a morning of ukulele demonstrations and tutorials at the Library. No experience necessary- just drop-in!

Wednesday 19th December, 2pm

Book launch: Nick Holland returns to Morrab Library after a fascinating talk on the Brontes in Penzance earlier this year, to launch his new book, *Aunt Branwell*.