



Morrab Library Newsletter - Autumn 2021



Welcome to our latest newsletter. With the library feeling more and more 'normal' with every passing day, there is lots going on as we head towards Christmas, and into 2022 (where has the year gone?!). It's been brilliant to welcome so many new members joining the library this year, and for many of you, welcome to your first newsletter. Get a cuppa, make yourself comfortable, and read on...

From the Chair



The independent libraries of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are an interesting and eclectic band with fascinating histories. Some have even published their story in book form* and I am sure that when the recent history of Morrab Library comes to be written, the period of 2020-2021 will, for a variety of reasons, be seen as a significant landmark year. When we tentatively reopened our doors in July 2020, it was uncertain how we would fare in a post-Covid era but since then we have been so pleasantly surprised

by the wealth of good wishes, the increasing daily usage by members, a surge in new membership and a gradual return to the old ways. We have just celebrated our first Wednesday afternoon talk, the Poetry Group and other stalwarts of the monthly round have returned, our rooms are busy with meetings and it was good to see so many old friends gathered once again on a sunny afternoon to bid farewell to India Vaughan-Wilson.

The Trustee body has been joined this year by Jane Val Baker, Paget MacDonald, David Holmes and Leslie Watson - they bring a wealth of experience to the table and their influence has already been seen in such areas as our sustainability profile and the plans for enhancing the basement area of the library. I am sure you will get to see and know them over the coming months. I am also very glad to welcome back Peter Chapman as a Trustee - he has also been making extensive inroads in the KOHA digitisation project. It is with great sadness that we bid farewell to Steve Clark as a Trustee. He was a fund of steadfast experience and, as Secretary, guided the Morrab through some turbulent times. We wish him and his family well at this difficult time.

A very warm welcome to Harriet-Jade Harrow who joins the Library team as Assistant Librarian. We wish her every success in her many endeavours and responsibilities.

As we move into the festive season I look forward to seeing you at either the Volunteers Tea Party (Nov 20th) or the Members Christmas Party (Dec 4th) where you will be able to admire the resplendent new carpet in the Reading Room (soon to be extended into the Children's Library/Travel and Geography Room). #Many thanks to all my fellow Trustee colleagues for their wise advice and counsel; to Lisa, Sue and Harriet for keeping us operational over the days, weeks and months and, above all, to you - the Membership - for seeing us through some interesting and challenging times.

Harry Spry-Leverton

* wearing my Honorary Librarian's hat, I would recommend "*Rude Words: A Discursive History of the London Library*" by John Wells (he of Private Eye fame and exquisite impersonator of Dennis Thatcher) published by Macmillan in 1991.

Photo Archive News

The work of the Photo Archive is again going ahead with old and new volunteers. Some old friends are yet to return but we look forward to seeing them all at some point. New photos have been added to the website so, if you haven't looked for a while, there are new things to see - <http://photoarchive.morrablibrary.org.uk/> . We continue to get new donations; some of them of great local interest so keep checking back.

Our project with the Arts Society has got off to a flying start. The lantern slides and glass negatives are being cleaned, repackaged and recorded ready for scanning. We are grateful to the Arts Society for finding the volunteers and part funding the project. The money we have from the Denis Myner Trust is being used to buy more conservation packaging.

The current exhibition, *Seen*, at the Exchange Gallery contains photos from our Serena Wadham Collection and more photos from our collection will be appearing in a new book by Tom Nancollas; *Ship Asunder*.

If you visit the Photo Archive room you will see that a large number of Denis Myner's paintings are now on display, reflecting his interest in the photos in the collection.

Introducing Harriet, in her own words...



Hello everyone, I have thoroughly enjoyed my first few weeks getting into the swing of things at Morrab Library and settling into life in Penzance. In case you were wondering how I came to be sitting here at the front desk I will begin, as many good Victorian novels do, by telling you where I was born.

I was born on the Isles of Scilly, and last summer I walked from home in Gloucestershire to Penzance on a personal pilgrimage to the Scillies. I heard about the Morrab Library on my travels and walking on the coast path rekindled my longing to move down to Penwith and to be part of something bookish and inspiring. I am delighted to be the new Library Assistant and have loved every moment of my first month working here. Thank you all for being so friendly and gentle with me as I learn all about the workings of this wonderful library; members, volunteers, staff and trustees have all made me feel so at home. I feel immensely grateful to be here, enveloped by books, learning constantly and to be included in your generous community. Thank you all for welcoming me in!

A little bit about me: I can often be found gallivanting along the coastal path, generally with a pastry and flask of coffee in my rucksack and always in the company of a good book. I studied English Literature at university, I worked in PR in London after I graduated and have been working on my artwork portfolio, focusing on food illustration, which I'm continuing to pursue alongside working at the Morrab.

I look forward to meeting you all over time and please do say hello when you pop in to the library - I am so curious to know what you're all reading and working on when you're beavering away upstairs!

Talks in 2022

We'd like to thank you for all the support you've given in the past for our talks programme, and in 2022 we look forward to delivering many more.

The Honorary Librarian and Librarian are currently in the process of putting together our monthly talks schedule for next year, and we'll send you this when it is finalised, so you'll be aware of what to keep an eye out for in 2022.

We are very aware that the size of the Reading Room limits the number of members who can attend talks, so very few of you actually get the chance to come along to see them. Staff are planning to try to address

this in two ways. Firstly, we are looking to trial a ballot system for talks, where attendees will be chosen from all who express their interest in joining us. It seems the fairest means of ensuring an equal chance of attending.

Secondly, the library is working towards being able to deliver 'hybrid' talks - where talks are delivered both in-person but also either recorded and made available online afterwards, or even streamed live online via ZOOM, so many more of you will be able to join in remotely. We're grateful for your patience and we'll keep you posted as we try to embrace all this new-fangled technology!

Upcoming events

While we have sadly decided not to host a Christmas Craft Fair this year, the Trustees are delighted to let you know that Morrab Library will be hosting its annual Members Christmas Party on the afternoon of 4th December, so save the date! More information will follow soon.

We will also be inviting our fantastic volunteers to the annual Thank-you Afternoon Tea on 20th November.

The library has also decided to host a stall at the Penzance Christmas Market on 18th December. As well as having the opportunity to promote the library to the good people of this town, it's also a chance to sell some second hand books, and copies of photographs from the Photo Archive, as well as other merchandise.

Volunteers will also be running the refreshments stand at the Penzance Orchestra Concert at St John's Hall on 27th November, to both raise some money and also promote the library. So if you're attending, make sure you say hello to Jak and her team. More information about the concert can be found here:

<https://www.minack.com/whats-on/penzance-orchestral-society-autumn-concert>

A new map of the library

The library has updated its floor plan. Our Trustee and member, George Care has created a beautiful set of watercolour drawings of the library's various rooms to illustrate our map, so now you can find your way around while enjoying his wonderful creations. Here's an example of his work...



Looking for gift ideas?

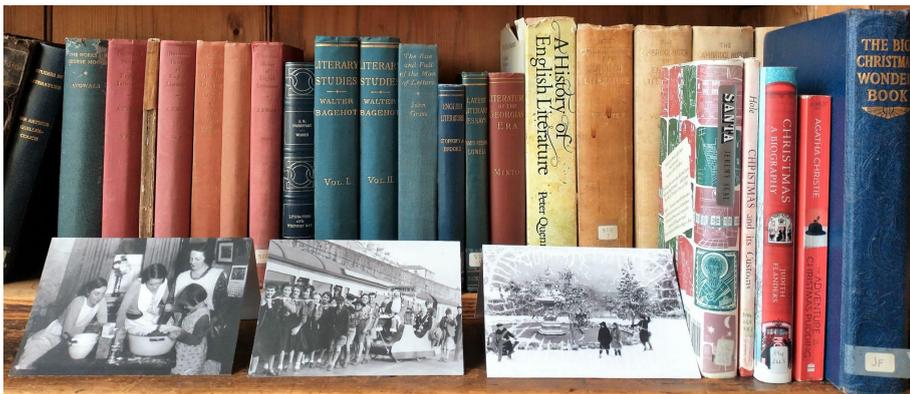
Do you have friends or family that you think would love the library as much as you do? Then why not consider Morrab Library Gift Membership - at just £30 for the year (£20 for students), they too can become part of our Morrab community.



We are very excited to tell you that our new range of Christmas cards, featuring images from our historic Photo Archive collection on the front, and artwork from our own Harriet on the back and inside, will be available to purchase from next week. There are three designs and you'll be able to buy them in different ways:

- Single cards - £1 each
- Set of the three different designs - £2.75
- Packs of five of the same design - £4.75

You can place an advance order with us now, or they will be available in the library by the end of next week. We are happy to send you your order in the post if you can't make it in to collect them for a small additional fee. Details and close-up images will be on our website next week too.





And our artist in residence John Trigg has released six new prints from his stunning artist notebooks (now housed permanently in our Archive) for sale, with all proceeds going to the library. These join the six already on offer - see our website for details: <https://morrablibrary.org.uk/john-trigg-prints/>. Images cost £65 and need to be pre-ordered from the library as they are printed on demand. We think they'd make a really special Christmas gift.



A reminder too that we have a great range of second-hand books for sale too - always a great stocking-filler, so pop in and have a browse.

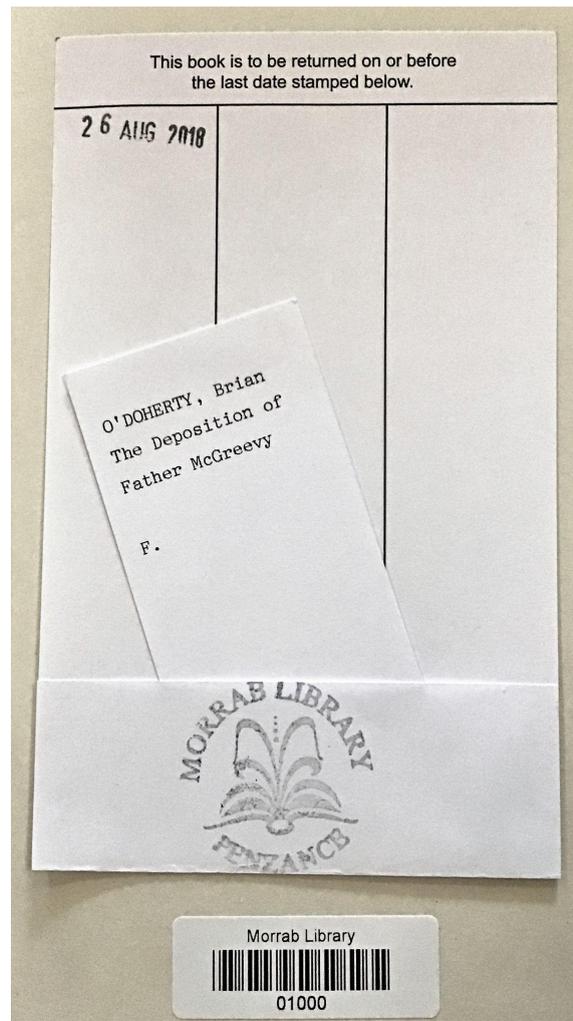
Penwith Futures Book

You'll have seen our email earlier this week about the Penwith Futures Book project, where we will seek the ideas and vision of the west Cornwall community for a healthier, socially just and environmentally sound future over the next twelve months, culminating in the creation of a special book for the archive. We would love our members to be central to this project so please do get in touch with us if you'd like to know more, or find more information on our website: <https://morrablibrary.org.uk/penwithfuturesbook/> It's already attracting interest from the local media, so keep your eye out for the library in the news!

Cataloguing news

Our fantastic volunteers are making amazing progress on cataloguing our fiction collection on to our new KOHA system - we have just added our 1000th book! And our hardy archive collection volunteers have been also working tirelessly to create records to add to the National Archives DISCOVERY catalogue. It

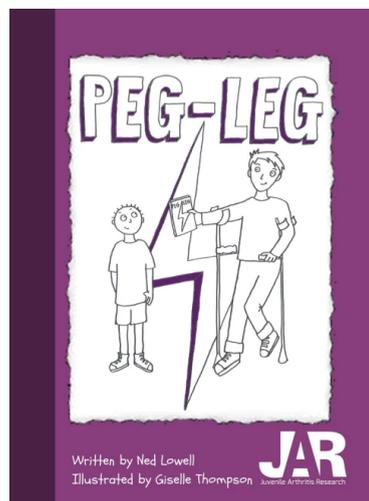
can be a bit of a grind for them at times, but they have also been unearthing some fantastic gems hidden within the collections which we'll share with you over the next few months...



Our inspiring Junior Members

Our junior members have been showcasing their talents in the last few months. Ned Lowell has recently published a book called Peg Leg (he was just ten when he wrote it!), all about his battles with juvenile arthritis - it's an inspiring story of perseverance, aimed at showing other children that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

And Ilani Weekes, who is nine, has created a beautiful new sign for the door to the Children's room for us. We love her vision of all her favourite book characters coming in to visit the library. Thank you Ilani!



We have also welcomed a new Duke of Edinburgh Award student, our fourth. Jeronimo Oxford Pope, a student at Humphry Davy school, will be working with staff over the next few months on an audit and creation of an electronic index to our artwork collections.

Short Story Competition

We had a brilliant response to our Short Story Competition this year, with more than 80 entries. The winners will be announced on 21st November, and we're thrilled that the wonderful actress Maxine Peake will read and record the winning adult's entry. We'll post this, and all the victorious entries on our website for you to enjoy. Thank you to library member Nigel Castle for sponsoring the competition, the Edge of the World Bookshop for supporting us with prizes, and of course our hard-working judges, Anna Murphy, Peter Moffat and Des Hannigan.

Christmas closure

An early notice that the library will close for the Christmas period (again, where has this year gone?!) at 4.00pm on Thursday 23rd December and re-open on Tuesday 4th January. So be sure to visit before then to pick up your Christmas reading, not to mention Christmas gifts!

Membership renewals

We'll be back in touch in January to remind you about renewing your annual subscription to the library, which runs from January to December each year. Membership rates will remain the same as this year, at £30 for a household and £20 for students. Life memberships are also available if you'd like to discuss these with staff.

Take care everyone, and hope to see you in the library soon.
Lisa and the library team.