

Morrab Library Newsletter Spring 2023



Welcome

Dear Members,

It's already March (although this week's weather isn't playing ball!) but we hope that soon the sun will shine and the joys of Spring will emerge. We're looking forward to a busy 2023 for the library, and hopefully this newsletter will bring you not only the latest news, but a taste of things to come.



If you'd like to learn more about our Trustees and staff, have a look at their dedicated pages on the website: <https://morrablibrary.org.uk/trustee/> and <https://morrablibrary.org.uk/meet-the-staff/>.

You'll also find pages on our President and Patrons here: <https://morrablibrary.org.uk/president-and-patrons/>

From the Chair....

St Piran's Day, 2023

It was good to see so many Members crowded into the Library for our Christmas gathering on the 10th December and a sure indication of just how far we had come since the uncertain days of the global pandemic. The Mousehole Male Voice Choir were truly uplifting as well as providing great entertainment on a winter's afternoon. It was also rewarding to see Philip Marsden making his first official visit to the Morrab in his new role as Patron.

The year is rapidly moving on and we are already approaching our usual round of Spring and Summer events. Could I also urge you to consider attending our AGM on the 15th May at The Luggar Inn? This is a good opportunity to hear of the minutiae of Morrab business over the preceding year and to ask questions of the Trustees.

Myfanwy Barrett, our Treasurer for the last three years who has kept us on the financial straight and narrow, is sadly moving away from Penzance. Although she will continue in her position over the next year, we are currently seeking someone to fill the Treasurer's position, with the aim of taking over in 2024. We hope there may be someone within the Membership who would be willing to take this on - it is an important, and fulfilling, role in the governance of the Morrab Library. Please do get in touch if you would like further information, or pass this on to those who you think might be interested in such a role.

We bid a sad farewell to Jak Stringer, our Housekeeper, who has been intimately involved with the Morrab over many years and in a variety of roles. We thank her for all her hard work - latterly, in running fantastic children's events, providing delicious catering and keeping us spotless. Thankfully, Jak is not moving too far away and will be seen in her new job aboard the Scillonian. We wish her every success and know we will continue to see her around the Morrab. We welcome Laura Luing as our New Housekeeper who may already be a familiar face to a number of Members.

The Morrab Gardens are looking wonderful at the moment with magnolias of every variety blooming. Spring beckons. There is also the small matter of a Coronation to come Happy reading.

Kernow Vys Byken,
Harry Spry-Leverton, Chair

Dates for the diary

A reminder of some important dates coming up in the library calendar before the end of the year:

- Saturday 15th April - Spring Fair
- Monday 15th May - Morrab Library Annual General Meeting
- Saturday 17th June - Summer Fair
- Saturday 18th November - Christmas Craft Fair
- Saturday 9th December - Members' Christmas Party

More information on each of these will be sent out in due course. And keep an eye out for our upcoming talks and workshops via our website: <https://morrablibrary.org.uk/events/>

Talks

We are developing what we hope will be an interesting selection of talks each month in the library throughout 2023, and we hope many of you have enjoyed what we've delivered so far.

We'll email you when the ballot opens for each one. It's been great to see a variety of members being able to attend thanks to the ballot system, and we are grateful for your donations - talks are another important part of our fundraising for the library. We do ask that if you gain tickets in the ballot, but find you can no longer attend, that you please let us know as soon as you can, as there is invariably a waiting list of other members who would love to take your place.

We will film some of the talks when possible, and load them on our website for all to enjoy.

Membership

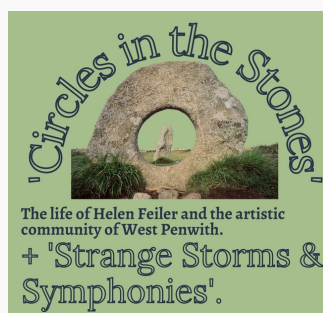
Enormous thanks to all of you who have renewed your membership for 2023. and a very warm welcome to all of our new ones! These vital funds are what keeps the library operating, so we can't do it without you. To those who are still yet to renew, please do get in touch with us to do so, or discuss payment options. Our annual memberships still run from January to December.

Volunteering

A number of members have asked about, or are interested in becoming a volunteer at Morrab Library, joining our current wonderful complement of 71! Vacancies do occasionally arise, though not often, and there is already a waiting list of members who have asked about working here. Tasks include working at the front desk, cataloguing book and archive collections, working in the Photo Archive, and even checking the pest monitors. We would be happy to add your name to the waiting list if you wish please just get in touch.

Children's Short Story Competition

Exciting news! The library will be launching a Children's Short Story Competition in April, so if you know any budding writers, please do encourage them to enter. The competition will be sponsored by our generous library member, Nigel Castle who is keen to encourage children to read more and provide opportunities to get their creative minds working. All the details will be available on our website soon, so stay tuned...



Some of the talks and end events held in the library so far in 2023. DVD copies of both films, Circles in the Stone, and Strange Storms are available to borrow from the library

New chairs

After some unforeseen delays, we are very happy to say that the new adopted chairs have now arrived in the library. Our fantastic maintenance man Kane, will soon be affixing all of the donation plaques to each of them. We hope people find these more comfortable; they are certainly less back breaking for staff and volunteers to carry about, but we do admit to a twinge of sadness when we said goodbye to the old chairs - they served us well and for a very long time.

Welcome to our new Housekeeper!

A warm welcome to the Morrab family to Laura Luing. As well as running her own cleaning, gardening and home-help business, Laura is a talented musician and audio producer, and leader of Penzance's Golowan Band!



A new donation

Last year, one of our very dearest volunteers, Katharine Mair passed away. Her husband John, now a volunteer with us, recently donated a beautiful painting by Katharine of our library, which will be hung proudly in the first floor foyer at the top of the stairs.

A recent exhibition of Katharine's other works at the Daisy Laing Gallery, attracted strong support from library members and raised an impressive £8,500 for the UN Refugee Agency. John would like to express his sincere thanks for our members support.



Help us create a vision for Penwith

Our Penwith Futures Book postcards and posters will be a familiar sight to many members, and we hope that you have been mulling over your ideas to contribute to the 'Penwith Futures Book'. This is the **FINAL CALL** for submissions, with our deadline of 30th April.

We've received some brilliant submissions so far and lots of interest from members – thank you all – but if you haven't sent anything in yet we would like to encourage you to put pen to paper and send us your ideas.



All the information you need can be found here:
<https://morrablibrary.org.uk/penwithfuturesbook/> or contact Harriet with any questions.

Inspiration, fun and learning

We've been hosting all sorts of visits and events in the last couple of months - from children's creative writing workshops and story time sessions, to a visit from 2nd year History Students from the University of Exeter (Penryn campus) to examine rare books and archives. Member and good friend to the Morrab, Mark Cottle, presented a sold out talk at the Acorn Theatre in conjunction with the library on Antarctica (and thanks go to Jak Stringer for facilitating this). The Penzance Girls Grammar School Old Girls held an open day, and we hosted a Humphry Davy Diary Transcribeathon in partnership with Lancaster University - our first ever onsite hybrid event (in-person and online). A definite highlight of February was a visit to St Levan Primary School's Assembly to present them with a special prize from the Patricia Eschen Poetry Competition. The entire school of 33 students submitted entries! Thanks to the Myner Trust they received special certificates and a voucher to buy books for their library. Some of the children read their poems out and all agreed they want to visit the library soon!

Here are a few photos to give you a flavour of what's been going on...



News from the Photo Archive

Tom Goskar completed the upgrade to the Archive's server and we had a meeting with the volunteers to fill everyone in on the changes. It was also an opportunity to compare notes and to clarify some of our ways of working. Many thanks to all the team, Tom and the Myner Trust for making it all possible. The image on the right shows all but two of the brilliant team who work so hard to make our collections available for all to see.



Everything is faster and more reliable now. We now need to think about the computers as they too are showing their age and will need to be replaced sooner rather than later.

We continue to delve into the Richards collection of glass negatives and we need your help. This photo of the harbour in Penzance is dated 1955 and shows three gasometers and buildings we are finding it difficult to identify. Do you recognise the large warehouse or know anything about any of the buildings that can be seen here? If you can help at all, please email the photo archive (photoarchive@morrablibrary.org.uk) or pop in and see us on a Thursday morning. All of our collection is enhanced greatly by the contribution made by members and friends in Penzance and West Penwith. You can look at the 14,000 plus images online via the [Morrab Library website](http://www.morrablibrary.org.uk).



David Puddifoot, Photo Archives Manager

Cataloguing the books

Another recent milestone for the KOHA book cataloguing volunteers. Here is Peter celebrating finishing the Cornish Fiction collection, a great achievement by the team. At the time of writing, work has started on piloting a project to catalogue the non-fiction collection, starting with the books in our art room. Steady progress is being made to make the library collections more accessible to our members, which is a very exciting prospect! Thanks go to all the KOHA volunteers.



Any Excel experts out there?

Lisa is attempting a tricky Excel manoeuvre but is failing badly - if any member has some expertise, she'd be grateful to hear from you!

And the Archives too...

A milestone for the Archive collection too. Another crew of fabulous volunteers are digitising the index to our archive collections, so proficiently created by the late John Simmonds over 20 years. We are gradually adding our collections to the National Archives DISCOVERY catalogue, which means researchers from around the world will be able to view our records and find out what treasures are held here.

We have just added one of our largest collections from the archive - the Borlase family archive, 100's of records spanning almost 300 years. You can view the records here: <https://bit.ly/3JegJMN>

Our volunteer Jane took on the task of digitising the Borlase records - a herculean task and a real labour of love for which we are immensely grateful.

Keep an eye out for news of an Archives Open Day in May, where we'll be putting some of our treasures on display!

Finally...

We hope you feel your membership brings inspiration, enlightenment and cheer. Please keep in touch - if we can help in any way, do not hesitate to talk to Lisa and the rest of the library team.

Contact us:

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