

Morrab Library Newsletter

(Autumn 2023)



Welcome

Dear Members,

While the weather has not been overly kind to us this Summer, the library has been buzzing with members and visitors working, reading and conversing, and enjoying events, workshops and talks, all in our beautiful spaces.

Our Autumn newsletter reflects on what's been happening, and looks towards the variety of exciting things to come this Autumn and Winter...



Don't forget, 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....

It has been a busy few months since our AGM in May and hard to comprehend that we are already moving into the last third of the year. The Spring and Summer Fairs have come and gone. The Morrab has undergone a much-needed redecoration over the Summer holidays and, now that the scaffolding is down, it is possible to see the newly painted walls and windows and the gleaming red front door. My thanks to everyone for their tolerance over parking issues whilst the scaffolding was up.

I mentioned at the AGM the decision that had been taken to move towards CIO status for the Library. A great deal of preparatory work has gone on in the background and, although the consultation period with the Membership has now expired, a change of this complexity requires an Extraordinary General Meeting to be held and this will take place on Monday November 13th at The Lugger Inn from 10.30 for an 11.00am start. Please do make the effort to attend if you can. It is good to know that our President, Michael Grandage, will be in attendance and will address the EGM. David Falcon, the Vice Chair of Trustees, gives fuller information about this further within the newsletter.

I will also reinforce my plea at the AGM for potential Trustees to join us. Trustee recruitment is vital for the future of the Morrab and is an ongoing requirement. Please do get in touch if this is something you might consider - there are several current Trustees who will be happy to chat informally and advise.

The Basement project is another long-term project which has been making steady progress: detailed architectural plans have been studied and we have decided on which of the three floor layouts we prefer. We now move onto the fundraising phase, and I hope we may be in a position fairly soon to make some public announcements.

Finally, it is good to welcome James Parnham-Kenny to the Morrab as Library Assistant. I'm sure that many of you will already have encountered him by now.

One event which is steadily approaching over the horizon is the inaugural John Le Carre` memorial lecture which takes place on May 2nd, 2024, at the Acorn Theatre. I'm delighted to announce that we have managed to secure the author Mick Herron to deliver this. Wearing my Hon. Lib's hat, I would thoroughly recommend his series "Slow Horses", commenced in 2010, which, honed over eight novels, gives an amusing and believable twist to the modern British spy novel. They will certainly enliven your Winter reading and we look forward to welcoming him to the Morrab.

Oll an gwellla. Harry Spry-Leverton



Dates for the diary

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

- Monday 13th November - Morrab Library Extraordinary General Meeting to change our legal status
- Saturday 18th November - Christmas Craft Fair
- Saturday 9th December - Members' Christmas Party
- Thursday 2nd May, 2024 - inaugural John Le Carre` Memorial Lecture

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/>

An important message from the Trustees: CIO Process - an update and date for your diary

Members will recall from previous emails that the Trustees are proposing a change in the legal status of the library for reasons set out in the Consultation Document we sent out in May.

The consultation period is now over and Trustees thank those of you who wrote – all the responses received were supportive of the proposed change. If you have any questions regarding the proposal please send an email to

cioconsultation@morrablibrary.org.uk.

We plan to hold an Extraordinary General Meeting on the morning of 13th November at the Lugger Inn to effect the necessary changes. The Trustees will circulate a formal notice for this meeting in due course which will contain the motions to be put to the meeting together with an explanatory note. It will be essential to achieve a quorum for this meeting so please make a note of the date.

David Falcon, Vice-Chair

Short Story Competition

Our Children's Short Story Competition, open to all under 16's across Cornwall, ended in July with a fantastic 200 entries! Our brilliant judges, Anna Murphy, Peter Moffatt and Des Hannigan have sifted through the stories to find our winners, who will be announced on 30th September. A huge thank you to our sponsor, library member Nigel Castle, as well as all who entered, our judges and everyone who helped promote the competition far and wide.

Membership

We have welcomed many new members to the library in 2023, and as ever, we are grateful to the many hundreds of you who have renewed your subscriptions this year. Your support means the world to us and is the key to providing the funds needed to sustain our special place. We are currently working to develop an updated membership system, which will make renewing, joining and payment far simpler. Watch this space for more details as we progress.

Workshops and Classes

Philosophy, creative journaling, tarot reading, illuminated manuscripts, seaweed pressing, poetry and Shakespeare, – just some of the topics delivered in classes and groups in the library throughout the year. Upcoming workshops are listed on our website and on social media so keep checking back for information.

A Big Welcome to James

July saw us welcome our new Library Assistant, James Parnham-Kenny to the Morrab family. James previously worked at the Royal Cornwall Museum and Hall for Cornwall. You can find out more about him on our website at <https://morrablibrary.org.uk/meet-the-staff/>. He works in the library on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, so if you haven't already, drop in to say a hearty hello. Out of interest, if Lisa's research is correct, we think James is the first paid male member of staff since 1889!

A big thank you to Alison Todd, our brilliant Bookkeeper, who acted in the vacant Library Assistant role for a number of months before James joined us.



Library Talks

Our talks programme in 2023 has seen us travel to the Silk Road, learn the secrets of writing a good crime novel, find out about those scandalous pre-Raphaelites, discover the art of Andy Goldsworthy, considered William Borlase's theories on uniformitarianism, and much more! You'll find a number of these talks recorded on our website: <https://morrablibrary.org.uk/librarytalks/>

We are grateful to all of our speakers who have generously donated their time and efforts free of charge to support the library, as well as the donations from attendees helping raising vital funds. Future talks this year cover subjects as diverse as Pillas wheat, bicycle adventures in South America, and Hugh Seymour Tremenheere. Keep an eye out for more information as ballots for each open.



You can watch replays of these talks, and more, on our website.

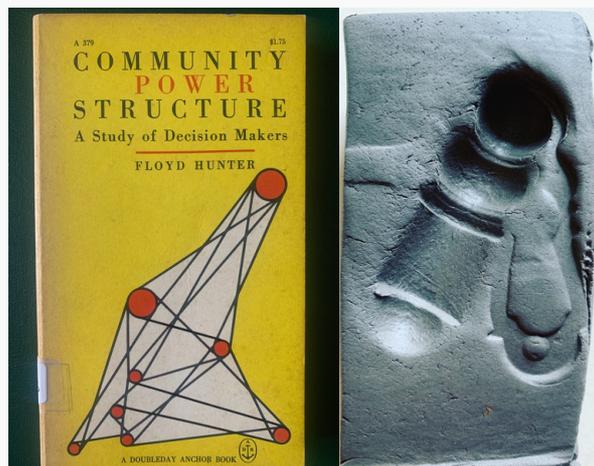
Artists in Residence

We love seeing how our library inspires local artists, and to discover how they respond to its spaces, collections and people, with the most incredible results.

August saw us welcome Vicki Aimers, book artist and authorial illustrator, for a week long artist's residency entitled 'Wastelands to Wonderland'. Vicki created a beautiful Cabinet of Curiosities, celebrating the life of Catherine Payton Phillips (1727 - 1794), a Quaker Minister who travelled the UK and the world and was also an ecology campaigner. She also ran book making workshops for members and volunteers, displayed an interactive art piece called 'The Library of Forgotten Fruits', and led a Community Day making seed diaries and encouraging seed planting.



Left: highlights from Vicki's residency
Below: Faye's inspiration, and one of her keyhole moulds



And we have another artist's residency under way too. Faye Dobinson has been inspired by a phrase from a book cover she spotted while visiting the library- 'Community, Power Structure'. She says: "I was drawn to the cover of the book for its formal qualities - the colour, the typography, and the illustration. The 1953 cover will be the visual starting point for my residency."

Faye is a West Cornwall based multi-disciplinary artist, activist and educator. She is also a curator, a Celebrant and leads 'Defining Practice,' a year long practical based art mentoring course at The Newlyn Art School. She is passionate about art and creativity's role in creating conversation, community, and heart led change. Read more about Faye's residency here, which will culminate in an exhibition in January:

<https://morrablibrary.org.uk/2023/07/faye-dobinson-is-our-new-artist-in-residence/>

Spring and Summer Fairs

An enormous thank you to all who attended our Spring and Summer Fairs, and to our volunteers who worked so hard to make each day a success. We raised more than £3,500 for the library. Both were lovely days, with our refreshments stall selling treats made by our members proving ever popular (thank you to all who contributed!), alongside our second hand book and plant sales, and all the beautiful wares sold by our local makers who hired stalls on the day.

Our Summer Fete welcomed two special guests who popped in to say hello and buy some goodies- our President Michael Grandage and Patron Dawn French (*pictured right*).

We're looking forward to our bumper Christmas Craft Fair on Saturday 18th November - save the date!



Another date for your diary

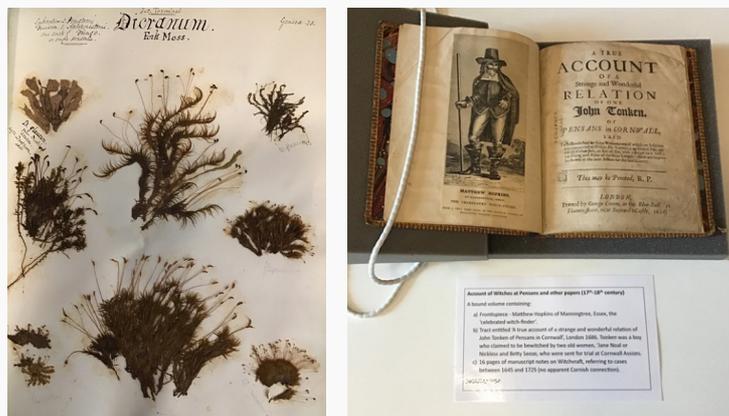
As mentioned by the Chair on page one, the library has organised the first John le Carré Memorial Lecture in 2024, with renowned author Mick Herron as our first speaker. The event will be held on the evening of 2nd May 2024 at The Acorn Theatre in Penzance. We are also pleased to say that The Arts Society of West Cornwall (TASWC) has agreed to be our main sponsor of the lecture. Morrab and TASWC members will be given first priority when tickets go on sale in the spring. In the meantime you can get a taste of what is to come if you listen to a recent BBC Book Club edition in which Mick Herron answers questions put by a studio audience at www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m001pf9n

Our younger volunteers

We have been so lucky to be joined by a number of younger volunteers in the library over the last couple of years. They take on roles as varied as working at the front desk, repackaging fragile archive collections, undertaking artwork audits, creating treasure trails and puzzles and much more. Others come and help us at our annual Fairs too. Some have also completed their Duke of Edinburgh Awards programme with us. Saturdays are now very lively and it's a joy to work with them!



A few of our young volunteers - clockwise from top right: Toby, Ilani, Evie and Eleanor



Archives Open Day

In May, we gave members and visitors the opportunity to get a glimpse of just some of the treasures held in our important paper archive collection. We welcomed more than 60 people who enjoyed seeing a letter from Charlotte Bronte, a 16th century map of Exeter, the 16th century St Just Easter Book, 18th century playbills from Penzance's New Theatre, engravings by renowned artist Hilda Quick, a volume from the Dawson Napoleonic collection, and much more. Don't forget, all are welcome to view items in our archive - you'll find a subject guide to our treasures here: <https://morrablibrary.org.uk/our-collection/>, or ask staff for help with accessing them. We'll be hosting a similar day highlighting some of our beautiful and very precious rare books before the end of the year, so keep an eye out for more information.

Supporting the library

Morrab Library is grateful for the financial support of members and supporters through membership subscriptions and donations from events, book purchases and much more. If you are in a position to do, so you may like to consider joining our Morrab Library Benefactor Scheme, which allows you to make additional regular or one-off donations on top of your membership fee. If you think you can help, please click here for more information: <https://morrablibrary.org.uk/morrab-library-benefactor/>



News from the Photo Archive

The happy band of volunteers are continuing to work hard cleaning, repackaging and scanning. But just when we think that we are getting closer to scanning the last box of glass negatives we find some more and new donations arrive! We are also spending time researching and refining some of the records. I have mentioned before that it is great to receive new information and corrections and we have been able to expand and correct some entries. You should find that new scans are now quicker to arrive on the public site so, if you haven't looked at the website recently you will be able to see some new material there -

<https://morrablibrary.org.uk/photo-archive/>

Over the last year one of our customers has been buying images from us for his personal interest and has been retouching and enhancing some of the photos. He has very kindly sent some of these images back to us and they are very impressive. He has now produced a book of shipwreck photographs and has sent us a copy. Thank you Michael. If you would like to see it come into the archive one Thursday morning - it's always nice to meet members and friends. After ten years of constant use one of our scanners is now playing up and we will be buying a new one with money from our own funds. We also hope that we will be in a position to replace our computers in the coming months. Technology moves on and ten years is a long time in the life of a computer! *David Puddifoot, Photo Archives Manager*

Visiting Groups

We love welcoming visiting groups to the library, be they local history groups, book clubs or students - we even welcomed a group of French students from PZ's twinned town of Concarneau. A particular highlight this year for us was the visit in July from St Levan Primary School - all 37 children and their teachers! We loved showing them around as they explored old class photos from their own school courtesy of the Photo Archive, completed a treasure trail around the library, drew pictures of the library views and enjoyed a story as well. A big thanks to volunteers Bridget and Jan who helped on the day. Lisa has also been out and about, and recently delivered a talk to the wonderful women of the Perranuthnoe & District Women's Institute, where she also judged the competitions!

Cataloguing the books and archives

We continue to make great advances on cataloguing the book collection. Sue Garwood and her dedicated volunteers have now added 7076 titles to the KOHA database, and the trial of the non-fiction titles in the Art Room is progressing well. We are also continuing to catalogue all new titles manually into the index card catalogue alongside this project, so many hands are ensuring our book records are up to date! Our thanks go to them, as well as our archives volunteers who continue to update and digitise the records of our manuscripts and other primary resources.

Finally...

Thanks to you, as always, for your continued support of our library. If you have any views, suggestions or feedback, please don't hesitate to get in touch and we shall do our best to help.

Contact us: *Morrab Library, Morrab Gardens, Penzance TR18 4DA Tel: 01736 364474*
Email: enquiries@morrablibrary.org.uk / Website: www.morrablibrary.org.uk
Facebook: @TheMorrabLibrary, Instagram: @morrablibrary or Twitter: @morrablibrary

If you would prefer a plain text, or paper copy of the newsletter, please contact the library.

Mystery Photo!

In the Sports section of the Photo Archive we have many photos of local football teams, perhaps a little more formally attired than this bunch of likely lads from Penzance Rovers! We particularly love the gent standing at the back, presumably their manager? The date on the ball is 1922-23, so exactly a hundred years ago. Might anyone recognise their grandfather among them?



Below: children from St Levan School examining a map from the collections



New Books

The Book Selection Working Group recently convened to pore over all of your suggestions and purchase new books for the library. Keep an eye out on the fortnightly links emails as we acquire and catalogue them all - we'll send a list. We also recently received a new batch of French language books from our colleagues at the Mediatheque in Concarneau - part of the Twinning Society's endeavours to forge links with our twinned city in Brittany. Pop in to see the new titles received and brush up on your language skills!