

THE MORRAB LIBRARY NEWSLETTER



March 2024 - Spring

Welcome

Dear Members,

It's been a horrid winter, but hopefully there are signs that Spring is slowly emerging, blinking in the sunshine!

Your library hasn't been hibernating though - here's a review of what we've been up to, and what's to come...

Library Closure

The Library will close over the Easter period from Friday March 29th and reopen on Tuesday 2nd April



FROM THE CHAIR...

It now seems a long time since we held our E.G.M. to discuss and vote on the move to CIO status. My thanks to all of you who attended on the day and also to our President, Michael Grandage, who enlightened us with tales of Sergeant Shakespeare and the London theatre. This was a significant day in the history of The Morrab Library, to use our new official designation, and enables us to compete effectively in the modern charity sector. The change was effected on 1st February and was both seamless and painless. The spirit and atmosphere of the Library are just as they have always been but it has been satisfying to achieve the long-held aim of revising our charitable status.

We have an interesting and exciting few months coming up with the Spring and Summer Fairs in quick succession on 6th April and 22nd June respectively. We are also beginning to get excited about the inaugural John le Carre Memorial Lecture, in honour of our late President and Patron, to be given by the author Mick Herron on 2nd May at the Acorn Theatre. There will be a number of associated activities about which we will be writing soon. Finally, there is our own AGM which takes place at The Luggar as usual on Monday 20th May at 11 a.m. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

Regular users of the Library will be aware that the long awaited redevelopment of the Gardeners House, by our good friends at the Hypatia Trust, has commenced. Entry, exit and parking might be a bit tight at times but we are in close liaison with the building team and hope to be able to give you advance warning of any significant operations or deliveries that might affect your visit. Thank you for your forbearance whilst this project develops.

Finally, I would like to welcome Stephen Oliver to the Trustee body and wish him all the best.

It feels as if it has been a long, wet winter but the Morrab Gardens are now looking wonderfully uplifting with their early Spring blooms. Let's hope for some sunny Cornish days to come.

Oll an gwella
Harry Spry-Leverton

FIND OUT MORE...

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/>

DATES FOR THE DIARY

- Friday 29th March-Monday 1st April - Library closed for Easter
- Saturday 6th April - The Morrab Library Spring Fair
- Thursday 2nd May - inaugural John Le Carré Memorial Lecture
- Monday 20th May - Annual General Meeting
- Saturday 22nd June - The Morrab Library Summer Fair
- Saturday 29th June - Library closed for Mazey Day

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/>

SPRING FAIR

Join us (and the hedgehogs!) on the 6th April for our Spring Fair. Books and photos for sale, craft stalls, plants and delicious refreshments. (Thanks to Harriet for the magical poster).



MEMBERSHIP

A very big thank you to the many hundreds of you who have renewed your subscriptions this year (especially with braving the new membership system!) and also to those who have just joined us, your support for us means everything.

LIBRARY TALKS



We have hosted a variety of talks at the library and we are aware that many of you miss out on tickets in our ballots. The good news is that many have been recorded and you'll find these on our website, which you can enjoy at your leisure on our website: <https://morrablibrary.org.uk/librarytalks/>

Keep an eye out for future ballots, and recorded talks. Subjects will include Wilkie Collins, Vanessa Bell and surf poetry.

JOHN LE CARRÉ MEMORIAL LECTURE



For those lucky enough to have obtained tickets, we are looking forward to the inaugural 2024 John le Carré Memorial Lecture which will take place at The Acorn Theatre in Penzance on Thursday 2nd May at 7.30pm. Organised by The Morrab Library and sponsored by The Arts Society West Cornwall, Mick Herron, author of the Slow Horses / Slough House series (available to borrow from the library of course!), will be the guest speaker.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW TRUSTEE

We are delighted to welcome a new Trustee to our Board of Directors. Stephen Oliver lives in Ludgvan, and brings many years' experience in education and teaching, as well as an excellent singing voice, to the table. Read more about Stephen, and all of our Trustees here: <https://morrablibrary.org.uk/trustee/>



BENEFACTORS

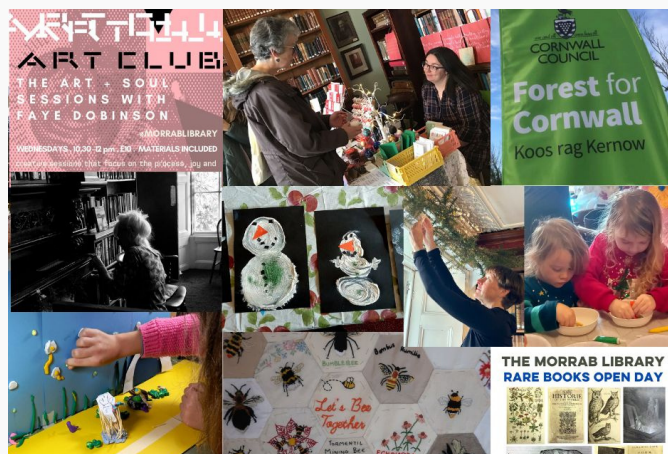
The Morrab Library is grateful for the financial support of members and supporters through membership subscriptions and donations from events, book purchases and much more. If you are in a position to do, so you may like to consider joining our Morrab Library Benefactor Scheme, which allows you to make 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/>

LIBRARY CLOSURES - WEATHER

Members will be aware that the library has had to close on a few days in the last couple of months, due to bad weather. We thought it might be helpful to explain in a little more detail why this has to happen. The first thing to know is that the decision to close is out of our hands. Cornwall Council own and manage the Morrab Gardens, and it is they who make decisions from their offices in Truro about whether to lock the garden gates. This is because they feel it may be unsafe for visitors due to the threat of falling branches and trees - which does happen on regular occasions. Once the gates are locked, access to the library is of course restricted too. We usually get no advance warning about these decisions and are only told once the gates are being locked. While staff can continue to work, either on site or from home, we need to stand down all of our volunteers and give them enough warning so they don't begin their travels to the library and take any undue risks.

This can create a particular problem when the Council make the equally swift decision on occasion to reopen the gardens later on the same day - again we are given no notice. Logistically it is then hard for us to ensure we have enough staff and volunteers on site to be able to open safely too. This is why the Gardens may at times reopen but the library isn't able to.

We are very aware of the inconvenience and sometimes confusion this causes to our members and volunteers. We try to ensure messages are relayed as quickly as possible through our website, social media and email, but we are aware some of you miss these and journey into Penzance and only discover our closure on arrival. If you think there may be any risk of the library being closed due to the weather, please call ahead on 01736 364474, especially if you are travelling in from farther afield - we would much rather clarify the situation with you than have you standing by the locked gates drenched in rain and being blown sideways!



RARE BOOKS OPEN DAY

We welcomed more than 70 members and visitors to our Rare Books Open Day in November. It was a chance to display our very special books, available for all to study and enjoy but not on the open shelves. Highlights included The Great Bible of 1539, 17th century editions of Chaucer and Edmund Spenser, early texts from Shakespeare and Milton, first editions Dickens', and of course, many Cornish classics. If you'd like to learn more about our rare book collections, contact the library staff for more information. And look out for future Collection Open Days.



WORKSHOPS AND CLASSES

Winter saw us embroidering bees, learning calligraphy, creating some art, journaling, enjoying a display of our rare book collection, celebrating our Christmas Fair and Members' Party, hosting artists-in-residence, handing out trees, telling fun stories to our toddler members, and so much more. There's plenty more to come this year so keep an eye out on our website and emails for information.

NEW BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY

The Book Selection Committee has recently been sifting through your suggestions and a number of new titles have been purchased. Click [here](#) to see the new Fiction titles added to the collection: Get in touch if you wish to reserve any titles.

We'll let you know as soon as the non-fiction titles are catalogued and available to borrow. Your suggestions are very welcome, and add to the richness of our resources. Add your requests to the book in reception, or pop us an email.

VISITORS FROM ABROAD...

Early in March we enjoyed what has now become an annual visit from students of the Concarneau school, the town in Brittany with which Penzance is twinned. They enjoyed a look around the library, a treasure hunt and a chance to look at some of our historic photographs. Despite the early hour, they were very enthusiastic. A big thanks to our volunteers who helped on the day. Our library also has a book exchange programme with the Concarneau Mediateque (public library) and you'll find many French language books in our collections which have been gifted to us.



PHOTO ARCHIVE NEWS

Though the Photo Archive began life many years ago and volunteers laboured away using hand written notes, typewriters and later spreadsheets to make a record of the photographs in our possession it wasn't until Dennis Myner extended the library and added a state of the art Photo Archive Room that technology really came into play.

From that point it was possible to scan and preserve the thousands of prints, floppy negatives and glass plates in our collections. Tom Goskar was responsible for setting up all the technology and without his guiding hand it would have been impossible for us to have achieved what we have. Tom kindly came in to help us set up the new Mac computers we have recently purchased with funds from the Myner Trust.

After more than ten years, due to pressures of work, Tom now needs to step away from volunteering at The Morrab Library. I would like to thank him on behalf of all members of the Library. His unique set of skills have given the Photo Archive a very high, professional operating standard and we will endeavour to continue that legacy. Good luck in all you do, Tom.

I would also like to welcome Ashley to the team of volunteers, we are very grateful for his excellent IT skills and willingness to get stuck in. Currently there are 12 active volunteers cleaning, packaging, researching and scanning. I apologise to anyone who has asked to join us in recent times, it has been difficult to arrange training.

However anyone who has an interest in our work and would like to contribute should contact me by email at: photoarchive@morrablibrary.org.uk

David Puddifoot, Photo Archives Manager

OUR MYSTERY PHOTO

Our mystery photos this time around focusses on the Salvation Army. Can you help us identify these people?

We don't have a date but they come from the Richards family collection and are studio portraits, as may be gathered by the wonderful fence and ornate background in the image of the men! The gents are obviously wearing the uniform of the Salvation Army, but it was harder to be certain about the women, who look very much like sisters, although the look of their bonnets provided a strong clue. But thanks to our scanning technology, we were able to zoom in closely to see that the band of cloth sewn across their bodices have the words 'Salvation Army' embroidered on them. Please get in touch if you have any ideas as to who they might be.



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.

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