

THE MORRAB LIBRARY NEWSLETTER



February 2025 - Winter

Welcome

Dear Members,

As Winter presses on, with the occasional hint of Spring, life at the library continues apace.

This latest edition of our newsletter will inform you of what's coming up to look forward to, as well as take a look back at the end of 2024...

A happy 2025 to all!



Sunrise from the library window

BOOKING DESKS TO WORK AT

Our membership numbers are growing steadily, but this great news has increased pressure on the demand for desks by members to reserve at which to work at. You can book a desk by emailing or calling in advance and letting us know how long you would like it for - and please do arrive at the time you have booked for.

Importantly, if you do need to cancel and no longer require the desk you have booked, please let us know ASAP, as there will be other members looking for a space.

Please also remember that phone calls, ZOOM and in-person meetings are not permitted in the library spaces - it is too disruptive to your fellow members.

We are grateful for your cooperation.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN...

The pinks and creams of the magnificent magnolias are beginning to appear in the Morrab Gardens – always a sure sign that Spring cannot be far away. We seem to have survived the worst that the Winter storms have thrown at us with the major casualty being the Members Christmas Party, thanks to Storm Bert. A rearranged event took place last month, but it might be tempting fate, at this stage, to predict no further closures of the Gardens due to weather conditions.

We seem to have been living on a building site for much of the last year, but a very interesting edifice is beginning to emerge with the converted Gardeners House, and Jewell Construction have been very considerate builders and kept disruption and noise to a minimum. Some Trustees were privileged to be given a hard-hat tour of the interior recently and it is clearly going to be a magnificent space. There will be a wonderful cultural hub at the top of the Morrab Gardens with many opportunities for cross fertilisation and shared visions. There will be an official opening in the Summer but, next time you are visiting the Library, see if you can spot the solar slates in the new roof.

I will repeat my request for potential Trustees to join us around the table. Last year we gained three but still have a need for someone with buildings experience to look after the lovely old Library building and also someone with legal expertise would be very valuable. Trustees now have limited terms of office and so there is a requirement for new faces and ideas on a regular basis. This is your library, and its future is in your hands. There is an information pack available at Reception and any number of Trustees and former Trustees who will give you an unvarnished account of what is required.

On 26th February, our Patron Philip Marsden and good friend and supporter Tim Hannigan will be at the Acorn Theatre to discuss books, Cornwall, travelling and a variety of esoteric matters. Both Tim and Philip have new books in the offing and, having seen them at the Falmouth Book Festival some years ago, I can recommend what will be a fascinating evening.

Our AGM is on 12th May at The Luggar – further details to be announced. The Spring Fair is not too far off on 12th April and another major initiative to be unveiled soon will be the launch of our Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC). Again, more information to come on this but, suffice to say, it is an exciting prospect for the Morrab Library which we have been working towards for some time. With best wishes.

Harry Spry-Leverton

FIND OUT MORE...

Learn more about our Trustees and staff via 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

- Wednesday 26th February, 7.30, Acorn Theatre - Philip Marsden and Tim Hannigan in conversation
 - Thursday 27th March, 10.00-3.00 - Morrab Library Archives Open Day
 - Saturday 12th April, 10.00-2.00 - Morrab Library Spring Fair
 - Monday 12th May, 11.00am - Morrab Library Annual General Meeting at the Lugger Hotel, Penzance
 - Saturday 21st June, 10.00-2.00 - Morrab Library Summer Fair
 - Saturday 22nd November 10.00-2.00 - Morrab Library Christmas Fair
 - Saturday 8th December, 1.30-3.30 - 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/>

MEMBERSHIP

Thank you to all our members who have renewed their membership so far this year - your support is vital and appreciated. For those yet to do so, our new online system means that you should receive a reminder inviting you to renew two weeks prior to your expiry date. Of course, if you have any problems or questions please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

LIBRARY EVENTS

It feels so long ago now, but thank you to everyone who joined us at our Christmas Fair last November, especially those who brought such magnificent cakes! It was a lovely day; a special thanks to all 23 volunteers who helped to make it so.

More recently, we enjoyed our rescheduled Members' New Year Party. A particular highlight was the performance by members of the Raffidy Dumitz Band who entertained us so happily. We've also enjoyed a number of other events, talks and workshops - here's a taster of just a few...



And there's more to come! Stay tuned to emails, social media and our website as we let you know about upcoming happenings, including three new artist, writer and poet residencies, writing workshops, talks and children's activities. Our next Archives Open Day on 27th March will showcase more of our treasured paper archive collections, including an 18th century scheme for the prevention of wrecks in Cornwall, correspondence between the Revd William Borlase and Alexander Pope about the latter's famous Grotto, and some Cornish Christmas carols.

GOING TO GROUND - TALK AT THE ACORN THEATRE



There are only a handful of tickets left for the library's event at the Acorn Theatre on 26th February at 7.30pm. Authors and two great friends of the library, Philip Marsden and Tim Hannigan will be in conversation as they celebrate Philip's new book, 'Under a Metal Sky'. They will talk about the cultures of Cornwall and Ireland, the interplay of nature and mythology, and Tim's current travel book project. We are delighted to be hosting this event, and proceeds from ticket sales will support the ongoing care and preservation of our special place. Buy your tickets directly from the Acorn Theatre: <https://www.theacornpenzance.com/events/going-to-ground/>

BENEFACTORS SCHEME

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/> or chat with Lisa.

OUR NEW LOGO

We have redesigned our library logo to reflect the very slight change to our charity's name when we became a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) - just add 'The'! It was imperative the wonderful image on our old logo was retained - we hope you like it!



MORRAB LIBRARY - THE MOVIE

The film made by Penwith College students we mentioned in the last newsletter is complete! Second year media students spent a few weeks researching, filming then putting together what we think is a charming 15-minute insight into what makes our library so special. You can watch it all at once, or in sections via this link: <https://morrablibrary.org.uk/the-morrab-library-documentary/>. You'll also find a bonus film featuring our President Michael Grandage and Chairman Harry Spry-Leverton in conversation. We loved working with the students and watching them develop their skills, and look forward to seeing their names in the credits of major productions in the future! Thank you to all who took part and the positive feedback we have received about it.

WINSTON GRAHAM HISTORICAL PRIZE 2025

If you enjoy reading historical fiction, you might like to help judge the prestigious Winston Graham Historical Prize for fiction this year. Members of the library have been invited to be part of a Readers' Committee which will contribute to the judging process. The Prize is organised by the Royal Cornwall Museum and was set up thanks to a legacy from the Poldark author Winston Graham. It shines a light on 'historical novels with a powerful sense of place'. We are one of a number of 'Book Hubs' where registered readers can borrow books that have been entered by publishers. Readers can read as many of the books on the list as they wish to before mid-March, then write a report based on the judging criteria supplied with the book. These reports will be used by the judging panel, along with their own judgement, to help them to whittle down 40+ books to a shortlist of just 5! Speak to staff for more information and to borrow.



NEW BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY

The Book Selection Committee recently considered your suggestions and a number of new titles have been purchased. Click [here](#) to see the new Fiction titles added to the collections, and [here](#) for new Non-Fiction. Get in touch if you wish to reserve any of them.

As ever, your suggestions are very welcome, and add to the richness of our resources. Write your requests to the book in reception, or send us an email.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY - MINUTE TAKER

The Board of Trustees are seeking the services of a volunteer to take on the role of minuting their monthly meetings. This is a vital role - accurately capturing and recording the key outcomes and work of the Trustees is essential to its ability to deliver good governance. The Trustees generally meet in the afternoon on the first Tuesday of each month. If you feel you might be able to help, contact our Secretary, Stephen Oliver, at secretary@morrablibrary.org.uk

OUR NEW NEIGHBOURS

You may have noticed the great progress made by the team from Jewell Construction on the refurbishment of the Gardener's House next door to the library. They have been a joy to work alongside, aiming to complete their work in the Spring, when the Gardener's House team take over to start preparations to open the building to the public. Keep an eye out for future developments, and find out more about the project on the Gardener's House website: www.thegardenershouse.org/

OUR CHILDREN'S SHORT STORY COMPETITION IS BACK!

We are excited to announce that our biannual Children's Short Story Competition is returning in 2025. We received over 200 entries from children all over Cornwall when it was last held in 2023. More details on this year's competition will follow soon, but for now, you may like to look back on the winning entries from 2023 [here](#).

A 'SOFT' APPEAL

Anybody who has spent time sitting in our beautiful but quite hard wooden chairs will know that the addition of a comfortable cushion helps considerably!

Many of our seat cushions are getting quite worn out, so this is a somewhat 'cheeky' appeal to ask if any of our members might have a spare cushion or two they may consider donating? Please get in touch with Lisa if you do, and thank you for assisting in the comfort of our members!



ADDITIONS TO OUR COLLECTIONS

The Library has been bequeathed some beautiful new books which will be added to our special collections. They were donated by the late Martin Croffill, a great library friend and avid bibliophile. The first is a very rare 1695 edition of Camden's Britannia by English cartographer William Camden, a county-by-county description of the British Isles, detailing the country's landscape, geography, antiquarianism, and history. This volume still contains more than 50 maps, which have been removed from many other copies. The volume is extra special as it belonged to, and has been annotated in parts, by George Macaulay Trevelyan, an eminent early 20th century historian and academic.

Martin's second donation is a work dating back to 1585, commonly referred to as the Geneva Bible. It is one of the most historically significant English translations, printed 51 years before the King James version. It was the version used by 16th-century English Protestants and by William Shakespeare, Oliver Cromwell, John Knox, John Donne, and John Bunyan. We are extremely grateful to Martin's family, and you are welcome to make an appointment to view these very special editions.

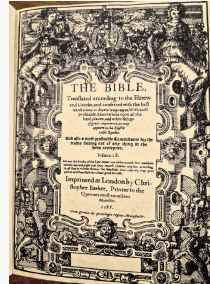
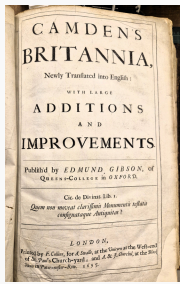
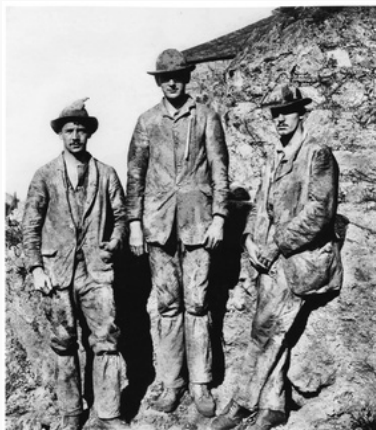


PHOTO ARCHIVE NEWS

From David Puddifoot, Photo Archives Manager:

The library team were kind enough to ask me to give a talk here a few weeks ago. It was a joy to introduce the Photo Archive to more library members, who took great interest in the selection of photographs I had chosen for the talk. One of the photos I chose was from the recently donated and brilliant Lamorna Birch collection, which shows three Cornish miners who seem to be part of the very landscape in which they stand. Don't forget that we are happy to meet members and visitors on Thursday mornings between 10.00am and 1.00pm. We can help you to access the collections and to chat about the wonderful images.

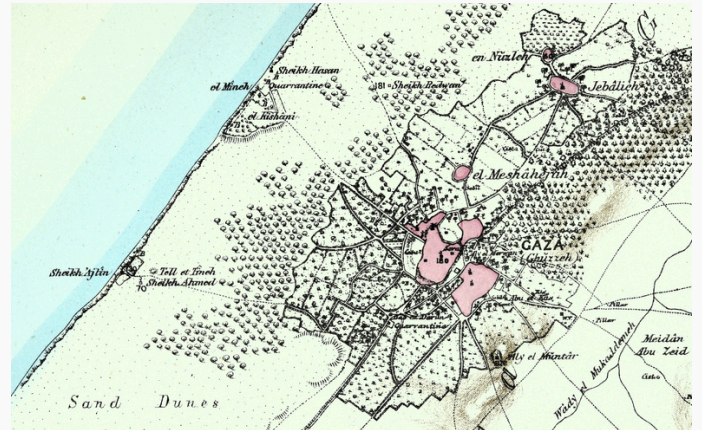


Morrab Library reference: lamornabirch.280

You can watch a copy of David's talk via [this link](#) on our website, where you'll also find many other library talks.

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES

The volunteer team continue to work hard to catalogue and digitise the index to our paper archive collections. Guy English has recently completed the unenviable, mammoth task of adding our extensive map collection. You can find and search the listing [online here](#), alongside other Morrab collections. One special highlight are our maps of Western Palestine, drafted by the Ordnance Survey in 1880. They comprise 26 sheets depicting Western Palestine from surveys conducted for the Palestine Exploration Fund. The fund, which still exists today, was founded under the patronage of Queen Victoria in 1865. Here's a section of the map of Gaza.



CATALOGUING THE BOOKS

Our team of KOHA volunteers also continue to add book titles to our new library system, with all fiction and non-Cornish art books now added, and the Natural Sciences collection well under way. Stay tuned for news later in the year about the next stage of development, when we launch a searchable catalogue of all of the 10,000+ records which have been created so far.

OUR MYSTERY PHOTO

It's the time of St. Valentine's, so our mystery photo this time is all about romance! This image from the Armstrong collection shows a man with a guitar standing outside a building serenading a woman, who can just be seen looking out the window. If anyone knows who this 'Romeo' may be, or the shy lady at the window, please do let us know.



Morrab Library reference: ARMS LA1 042

RESIDENCIES IN 2025

2025 will see a number of residencies at the library - including a writer, a poet and a textile artist. More information on each will follow, but for now, here's a taster...

Writer in Residence | Peter McAllister | Feb 2025 - Feb 2026

Peter, an author and poet, will be our Writer in Residence for a year, starting in February. He will be running one creative writing workshop per month for the duration of his time here, and there will be other opportunities for workshops and events with Peter throughout the year. He is the editor and co-founder of Infish Magazine, and was the inaugural Liskeard Library Writer in Residence. During his residency here, Peter will be writing in response to the Library and will be creating a piece for the library's archive in perpetuity.

Artist in Residence | Vicki Aimers | 11th-15th March

Book and Textile artist and PhD Researcher at Falmouth University, Vicki Aimers will be returning to The Morrab for a week-long Artist Residency exploring textile stories in West Cornwall. Her Residency will be titled 'A Guiding Hand' and draws directly from the Library's collection using a photograph of a governess stitching from our Photo Archive as the starting point. It will include an exhibition in the Elizabeth Treffry Room, workshops, a children's activity and a talk, as well as opportunities to embroider with the artist.

Poet in Residence | Jodie Hollander | 15th April - 10th May

U.S. based poet, and 2024 Patricia Eschen Prize for Poetry competition judge, Jodie Hollander will be our 'Poet in Residence' from mid-April to mid-May. Her residency has been generously sponsored by the Myner Trust. You may remember her visit in 2023 where she delivered a talk and workshop on her work. Her debut full-length collection, My Dark Horses, was published in 2017 and her second, Nocturne, in 2023, and was longlisted for the Laurel Prize in nature writing. Jodie will run workshops and host readings during her time with us.

LOOKING FOR GIFT IDEAS FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS?

We have a range of gift options for sale, all of which will help support the library's work.

Gift Memberships - these are available for household or student memberships. Share your love of the library! (£20-£40);

Morrab Library Pens - quality black ink pens with the library logo and name embossed on them. (£2.50);

Morrab Library Postcards - choose from 1 of 3 different views of the beautiful interiors (60p each);

Greetings cards - a range of blank cards featuring photos of local landscapes and features, created by one of our volunteers (£1.50);

Second hand books - a great selection of pre-loved books for sale, a perfect gift for a like-minded book lover (prices vary);

1841 Map of Penzance - A high quality reproduction of the 1841 map of the Borough of Penzance (£20);

John Trigg prints - Choose a high quality print from one of twelve beautiful images, taken from the collection of drawing books donated to the library by the artist John Trigg (£65).



John Trigg - Morrab Magnolia



Library gift ideas

LIBRARY POETRY GROUP

The library's poetry group, now in its seventh year, meets fortnightly on alternate Thursday afternoons from 1.30pm. There are a limited number of places for new or returning members. The group reads and discusses poems by a variety of poets, chosen by a member of the group.

Contact the Group's convenor, George Care, by email (mlpoetrygroup@gmail.com) if you would like to find out more information and/or join this engaging group.

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: The 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

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