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The Leeds Library



Speaks Volumes 26

The Bi-Monthly Newsletter of The Leeds Library

April 2021



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From Your CEO

Dear Member

We hope you and your loved ones are safe and well. We are pleased to confirm that the Library will be reopening again from Monday 12th April. There is in this edition of Speaks Volumes a Q & A article which hopefully answers many of the questions that you may have as to how the Library will operate as we move slowly out of the nationwide lockdown. We cannot wait to see as many of you as possible over the coming weeks and months (in a socially distanced way!) and are grateful for the patience and support you have shown us during this difficult period.



As and when you do visit, you will see a Library building that over the last 12 months has had significant investment and improvement. Through the support of the National Lottery Heritage Fund we have replaced and upgraded many items of furniture, various repairs have been made to the fabric of the Library building and we have installed a new fire alarm system, CCTV system and new IT equipment. The pinnacle of these improvements, however, with support of the Trustees, is the replacement of the Library's linoleum flooring which in recent times had deteriorated and impacted on the aesthetics of the Library, with a stunning wood effect flooring throughout all of its main spaces. The Library has never looked better. Nor has it ever offered such a comprehensive range of services for its Members or reviewed the way that the Library layout and furnishings work best for the benefit of Members. In January when we went in to the third lockdown, we stated that we were committed to ensuring that when we reopened, we would be the best version of the Library we could possibly be. Our belief is that we have achieved that and we can't wait for Members to rediscover the Library and its magic as we go forward.

Finally, we are delighted to announce that we are to receive further support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund through a round 2 grant from the Culture Recovery Fund. The grant award of £28,100 will enable us to open up the Library quickly not just for our Members but also for visitors over the coming months so that they too can engage with our heritage story. Over the last 12 months we have secured 3 separate grants from the Heritage Fund which has provided an opportunity to develop a dialogue between the two organisations that we hope will have many benefits over the coming years. It is clear that we are held in increasingly high regard by them and that the Fund now sees the Library as a key heritage asset in the city, not least due to our central location and well received outreach work with projects such as the Leeds Lit Fest. The third festival was delivered digitally at the beginning of March where we worked with 9 other partner arts organisations to make the festival a reality in very challenging circumstances.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of Speaks Volumes. Please take care and stay in good health and good spirits. If you do have the chance, pop in to the Library, say hello and see what we have done to make it a better space for you.

Best wishes, Carl Hutton



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From Your Editor

Welcome to Speaks Volumes 26, a bumper edition just in advance of our reopening! There's a lot to tell you. We cannot wait to welcome you back on Monday and for you to see all the improvements that have been made during our closure. We've got new flooring, new members of staff starting in the Library and new plans for more digital services and programmes that you can engage with thanks to the Culture Recovery Fund.

It's been a really difficult and challenging time for everyone but we hope that you will feel ready to come back into the Library soon and enjoy the Library building and the sense of community that we all feel especially when we are there together. We've missed you as much as you have missed us. Please read the Q&A section for the Covid-19 measures that are in place for all our safety and if you have any questions then get in touch and we'll do our best to help you.

Since our last edition of Speaks Volumes in February, we've had Leeds Lit Fest! 10 partner arts organisations delivered 25 digital events with great success for this third festival. I can't deny it wasn't a little hair raising at times and stressful but we are all so proud of what we managed to achieve including two live streamed events from the Library. You can watch back many of these on the festival's YouTube channel including the Strictly Sherlock theatre performance from the Library. See the article for full details. There will be more live streamed events during this year.



I'd also like to draw your attention to two poetry events coming up, one in April and one in May. My thanks to Hannah Stone for her article about poet Amir Darwish (left), her next guest at Nowt But Verse on Friday 16th April. Amir is a wonderful poet and I can't wait to hear him talk about his life and read for us. Then on Friday 14th May, as is our tradition, we are celebrating International Dylan Thomas Day with readings and also a book launch for a new anthology, *Dear Dylan*. Both events will take place on Zoom and can be booked through our

[website](#).

My thanks also to contributors Lucy Evans and Roger Taylor for their book reviews, and to Michael Meadowcroft and Melanie Chan for their articles.

The next issue of Speaks Volumes will be published in June and I'd be delighted to receive your articles for inclusion by Monday 24th May by email to gellf@theleedslibrary.org.uk.

With my very best wishes

Fiona Gell, Marketing & Communications Officer





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Library News

New Flooring in the Library



When the Library closed its doors at the start of the year for the third lockdown of the Covid-19 crisis, work began on developing a funding application for the second round of the Culture Recovery Fund. An initial idea for the application was to see if we could use it to support the replacing of the Library flooring which was in an increasingly poor condition. It quickly became apparent that we would not be able to ask for funding for such a building improvement. However, looking at the possibility of investing in the flooring started a quick and intense period of discussion between the staff team, Trustees and Resources Committee about using the

period of lockdown to do the previously unthinkable and replace all of the Library flooring in one go. For anyone who remembers the flooring that has now thankfully gone, its key characteristic was that it had been clearly installed in sections at different times over a number of years, and in different colours and shades providing a quirky, inconsistent and challenging aesthetic that the rest of the Library building had to compensate for aesthetically.

The outcome of the discussions was that the Trustees decided to replace all of the flooring, the cost of which would be covered by the Library rather than from grant funding. A key reason for the decision being that to undertake the work during the lockdown period would stop the Library having to close for a period of several weeks in a few years' time to undertake the inevitable work on the floor.

The choice of the type, style and pattern of the flooring was agreed through a consultation of Trustees, staff and the Buildings Committee. We hope that you will agree when you see it for yourselves that the new flooring shows that the decision to invest in the Library in this way has been an excellent one.





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Library News

Q&As on the Reopening of the Leeds Library for Members from Monday 12 April

The information set out here is to help you understand how the Library will operate for Members when we reopen on Monday 12th April so that you are aware of any restrictions that might be in place when you are planning and undertaking your visit to the Library.

We thought the best way to do this was to once again answer the most likely questions that you may have at this time. Something that we did after the Library reopened after the first Covid-19 lockdown. Whilst the questions remain the same, some of the answers have changed so we would recommend that you reread the whole Q and A so you have a good understanding as to how we will operate the Library.

What will the Opening Hours of the Library be?

The Library will be open as follows:

Monday	10am to 4pm
Tuesday	10am to 4pm
Wednesday	10am to 4pm
Thursday	12noon to 6pm
Friday	10am to 4pm
Saturday	10am to 4pm
Sunday	Closed

Why will the Library be open for only 6 hours each day?

The opening hours have been reduced to limit the need for staff or Members to travel into or out of Leeds during rush hours.

I don't want to come into the Library just yet, but I have items that are due for return. What should I do?

We have extended the loan period of all items currently on loan to Members until the end of May so please do not feel obliged to bring your items in if you would rather not travel yet. However, if you would like to return them, you, or someone on your behalf, can drop them off in the Library foyer in a returns box. The foyer will be staffed during opening hours and all items will be quarantined for 24 hours before being processed and put back on the shelves for other Members to access. We are also offering a limited collection service. Please see the later article in the Remote Library Services section.



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Library News

Q&As, cont'd

I am feeling unwell. Should I come to the Library?

No. If you are feeling unwell for any reason and especially if you are exhibiting symptoms of Covid-19, you should not come to the Library but follow government guidelines and seek medical advice if appropriate. This is to protect other Members and the staff team. We are sorry to say but we will have to turn you away if you are obviously unwell.

Will there be restrictions on the number of people who can use the Library each day? If so, do I have to register or pre-book my visit if I want to come into the Library?

Following current social distancing guidance from the Government, we are working on the basis that excluding staff Members, we will be able to have up to 40 Members in the Library at any one time. We have set up the Library so that it looks as close as possible to how the Library would have looked prior to the Covid-19 crisis. However, we will place signs next to any seats that are not available for people to use to enable us to maintain appropriate social distancing in the Library. It may be that from time to time the Library reaches full capacity. However, previous experience suggests that this occurrence is likely to be rare. All Members will need to register on arrival in the foyer so that we have a record of who has been in the Library each day in case a Member or a staff member contracts Covid-19 and it is necessary to trace their contacts. This information will be held for 21 days then destroyed. Staff in the foyer will assist you with this.

Will there be any restrictions on how long Members can stay in the Library?

We are not putting any formal time limits in place but would ask that Members judge the daily situation for themselves in a sensible and fair way. If the Library is busy and there are Members waiting to gain access, then a shorter visit would be appreciated so that everyone who wants to can benefit from coming to the Library. If problems arise from this more relaxed approach, we will review the situation and may introduce a formal time limit. We would like very much to avoid doing this, however.

Will there be any parts of the Library, or services normally available to Members, that will not be available at this time?

For the Library to work in a manner that is consistent with Government guidelines regarding Covid-19 and social distancing, the following aspects of the Library service to Members will NOT be available:

- Drinks making facilities will not be available in Coffee Corner.



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Library News

Q&As, cont'd

- Food consumption on the premises by Members will not be permitted in this initial reopening period.
- The Basement and the Old Librarian's Office will not be available.
- The Library locker and cloakroom areas will be closed.
- The Member computers will not be available to use and the use of the photocopier will only be available when undertaken on behalf of a Member by one of the Library staff team.
- Member Clubs including the Film Club, Craft Club, The Book Club and the Tuesday Morning Book Club will not take place in person for the time being but will be reviewed as social distancing measures are relaxed.
- There will be no facilities for leaving bicycles or mobility scooters in the Library foyer.

What social distancing measures will be in place within the Library?

The Library will have a one-way system for all Library users to abide by. The direction of travel will be anti-clockwise requiring everyone to walk from the Main Room towards the New Room and then the Thoresby Room. In any area of the Library where there may be a need for Members to queue there will be an expectation that members queue 2 metres apart. It is anticipated that queueing may be necessary to get into the Library, at the Library counter and to use the Library welfare facilities. We have also adjusted the layout of the Library to remove potential pinch points. This will mean that there will be no merchandise on display for either the Library or Thoresby Society. Several pieces of furniture have been replaced throughout the Library with new chairs and tables that are easier to clean and aesthetically suit the historic interior of the Library.

Will toilet facilities be fully open for Members to use when the building is open?

Both the gents and ladies' toilets will be open for Members. There will be a restriction of only one Member at a time being able to use the ladies' toilets, with one of those cubicles being dedicated solely for the use of Library Staff. It will be a requirement for anyone using the toilet facilities to use disposable toilet seat covers.

What additional hygiene facilities and measures will be put in place for users of the Library?

Any person entering the Library will be required to use hand sanitiser in the foyer before going upstairs. There can be no exceptions to this. There will be also be hand sanitiser located at the entrance to each room when moving around the Library anti-clockwise.



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Q&As, cont'd

What additional hygiene facilities and measures will be put in place for users of the Library?

It is recommended that if you have handled any items or touched any surfaces as you enter each space that you reapply hand sanitiser. Should a Member handle any book in the Library then there will be a need for the item to be placed in one of the plastic crates located in each of the rooms so that the item can be placed in quarantine for a 24-hour period.

On a similar basis there will also be a need for Members who sit on a chair in the Library to use a card provided adjacent to the chair to identify that the chair has been used. This will enable the staff team to be able to easily identify which chairs and furniture needs to be sanitised during the day. As well as the regular cleaning that takes place in the Library outside of opening hours, additional cleaning will take place while the Library is open. Surfaces, door handles and other vulnerable areas will be sanitised regularly during the day. Doors and windows where possible will be open to aid ventilation.

Will Members be required to wear face masks or face coverings when visiting the Library?

Yes, consistent with Government legislation regarding the use of public buildings during the Covid-19 crisis, all users of the Library including the staff team, library Members and visitors will be required to wear face coverings whilst in the public areas of the Library. In addition, there are screens in place at the counter and in the foyer to minimise the potential for Covid-19 to be spread.

If I am unable at this time to come to the Library, what services will be available for me to use so that I can continue to benefit from my Membership?

The Library has set up a number of online services for the benefit of Members. These include an eBooks Library which has over 600 titles, access to PressReader which gives Members online access to over 7000 magazine and newspaper titles, the Drama Online service and the Idler Academy. We will also continue our postal service for Members and up until the end of May provide a book collection service to assist Members in returning items that they currently have on loan if they can't get into the Library themselves or have someone else return items to us on their behalf.



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Library News

Q&As, cont'd

When will these measures be reviewed?

The staff team and Trustees will monitor all aspects of the operation of the Library on a regular basis and will adjust the current arrangements in the light of the anticipated changes in the Government's roadmap out of the Covid-19 crisis over the coming weeks. Should the Government's schedule for coming out of lockdown stay on track, it is hoped that by the end of May we will be in a position to enable Members to once again consume refreshments in the Library and that by the end of June we will be in a position to reduce a number of the social distancing measures in the Library. We will ensure that Library Members are notified in a timely fashion as and when these measures are undertaken.

Behind the Scenes of the Flooring Refurbishment

We thought that you might like to see some of the work in progress pictures that we took as the refurbishment progressed.





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Library News

Library Supports the National Kickstart Programme

In response to the impact that the Covid-19 crisis had on the career opportunities for young people, the Kickstart programme was set up by the Government to give 16-24yr olds the chance to work for 6 months in organisations to get a start in their chosen careers. With the salary of the placements covered by the Government, businesses throughout the UK were encouraged to support the scheme.

At a time when the Library has benefitted greatly from the support of the Culture Recovery Fund courtesy of the National Lottery Heritage Fund, it felt appropriate that the Library should be proactive in the support of this initiative and to actively encourage the next generation of library, arts and culture professionals.

We are pleased to say that we have appointed two placements through the scheme. Jack Simpkins will be our new Digital Media Assistant, helping produce podcasts, live streamed events and pre-recorded films to present the work of the Library to a broader range of audiences. Finnian Davies will be our new Online Library Assistant helping the Library team establish and further develop its increasing online services for Members and looking at new ways of developing online services for the benefit of Members.

Alongside Jack and Finnian, but separate from the Kickstart programme, we are delighted to welcome Molly Magrath (below) who will be with us for an initial 3 month period as a Project Assistant helping us to take forward several pieces of promotional work and assist with the digital output from Jack and Finnian's work. Molly has a background in art history and visual culture.

We hope that you will get the chance to meet Jack, Finnian and Molly in the Library soon.





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Annual General Meeting: New Trustees Needed by Martin Staniforth, Chair of Trustees



Assuming there are no changes to the current plans for easing the Covid-19 lockdown the Library's Annual General Meeting will be held at **2.00pm on Saturday 26 June** in the Library. Further details and the papers for the meeting will be circulated nearer the time but you may wish to put the date in your diary now.

At the AGM we will need to appoint three new members of the Trustee Board. The Trustees are responsible for setting the strategic direction for the Library, for overseeing the development and delivery of annual plans and budgets, and for ensuring that the Library uses its money appropriately. It is an important role, and one in which you can make a real difference to the way in which the Library runs.

We are looking for people who are enthusiastic about the Library and are willing to contribute their time and their ideas to shaping its future rather than for particular skills and expertise. We are also looking to increase the diversity of our Trustees so that we benefit from a wide range of voices and views around the table. This will be particularly important as we develop our plans for taking the Library forward in a post-Covid world and look to attract new Members.

As for the time needed, the Board meets six times a year, normally at the Library though we have necessarily been meeting by Zoom over the last year. Trustees are also encouraged to join one or more of the sub-committees which focus on different areas of the Library's business and which meet three or four times a year. The current sub-committees are Books and Collections, Buildings, Membership, Outreach and Partnerships, Research, and Resources, so they cater for a wide range of interests.

Please consider standing for election and playing a big part in the Library's future. If you would like further information or to discuss what is involved in being a Trustee please get in touch with me and I'll be happy to help.

You can contact me via the Library e-mail: enquiries@theleedslibrary.org.uk or by calling the Library: 0113 245 3071 and the message will be passed to me or you will be given my details to contact me directly if that is preferable.



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Independent Libraries Association Conference 2021 - Call for Papers. Hosted by the Leeds Library, 24th-25th September 2021.



We are delighted to re-issue the call for papers for the ILA's annual conference postponed from 2020. The conference theme was 'independent libraries as the Great Good Place', inspired by [Ray Oldenburg's concept](#) of a space that is welcoming and free to access, and promotes pleasure, wellbeing, and engagement.

The library has always been a place where communities can connect, grow and (re) build, and this is the case more than ever in 2021. Independent libraries responded to the Covid-19 pandemic with energy, innovation and speed, supporting their members with new initiatives. Social media, email, digital events and even the good old-fashioned pen-and-ink letter were pressed into service. Book deliveries, postal loans, online catalogues and reading groups took on new significance as the country went into lockdown.

For the 2021 conference which is taking place from 24th-25th September, we're keeping the concept of the 'Great Good Place' and we want to hear how you and your libraries create a space that is welcoming, culturally-nourishing, and supportive - particularly during the past year. You might want to share: your library's mission statement, guiding principle, manifesto, or aim; how has that sustained your work this year?; the history of your library and its place in your community, or how your library's past shapes its future; a particular project, event, or renovation which helped your library engage with more people; how your collections shape what you do.

We welcome submissions from anyone working in or around the independent library, museum or archive sector. We emphasise that submissions need not be scholarly and we would particularly like to hear your success stories from 2020 and your plans for the future. Talks should be limited to around twenty minutes. We also welcome proposals for panels of up to an hour. **Please send your 250-word proposals accompanied by biographies of up to 150 words to library@gladlib.org by Monday 31st May 2021.** Please also indicate whether you are able to physically deliver your talk in Leeds, or need to do so remotely.



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Events. Leeds Lit Fest 2021. Watch Back On The Festival's YouTube Channel!

If you missed any of the great events that were part of Leeds Lit Fest 21 or simply want to watch some of them back, head over to the festival's [YouTube channel](#). You'll find recorded there now:



LBC radio presenter [Iain Dale](#) examining why we've all become so disrespectful and intolerant in *Why Can't We All Just Get Along*. His book of the same title is part-memoir, part-polemic and looks at the state of public discourse in Britain and the world today. Using experiences from his career in politics and the media, he says it doesn't have to be this way, and suggests how we can all emerge from tribalism and division and become more respectful to each other and those who govern us;

[Tim Glister](#) discussing his debut novel, *Red Corona*, a gripping Cold War spy thriller about the beginning of the surveillance era, spanning 3 countries: Britain where MI5 agent Richard Knox is trying to find out who put his boss in a coma; Russia where a brilliant scientist makes a breakthrough that could change the world; and the US where a young CIA recruit is determined to make a difference;



Don't Go Into The Cellar theatre company performing their [Strictly Sherlock](#) show livestreamed from the Library.



Along with debut authors Stephanie Scott (left) and Catherine Menon talking about their novels both set in Asia; the first Leeds Lit Fest Salon hosted by Clare Fisher; Lewis Dartnell talking about his book *Origins*; children's author Harry Heape with a book gobbling adventure; and a writer's panel featuring Helen Mort (right), Anna Chilvers, Jason Allen-Paisant and Professor John Whale.



More recordings will be added very soon for you to watch from the comfort of your own home. You can still donate to the festival and help ensure that it's here for literature in the city for many years to come.

[Donate here](#). Thank you!



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Events. Nowt But Verse with Special Guest Amir Darwish

Our popular host Hannah Stone tells us more about Amir who will be joining us for April's [Nowt But Verse](#).



[Amir Darwish](#), a British Syrian poet of Kurdish origin, is a polymath, and poly-lingual writer. He arrived in Britain as an asylum seeker in 2003 and has made his mark in many different fields in the UK and globally, whether supporting children as a volunteer in Morocco or Brazil, or as an interpreter throughout the UK. He holds degrees in History, International Relations, Creative and Life Writing and is currently preparing a PhD. His poetry and other writings have been published in the UK, USA, Pakistan, India, Finland Turkey, Canada, Singapore, and Mexico, and have been translated into many different languages. His works include *Don't Forget the Couscous* (Smokestack, 2015), *From Aleppo Without Love, part one: an autobiography* (Salvation Press, 2017) and *Dear Refugee: Prose Poems* (Smokestack, 2019).

I first met him when he was performing at the annual Writers' Festival at Leeds Trinity University a few years ago and was blown away by the power and strength of his poetry. It is, to use a phrase used by a Jane Austen character, *necessary work*, which enriches your understanding of global events, nudges your conscience, breaks your heart, and makes you laugh. His poetry acts as a close up lens on the human condition, whether he is reflecting on Amsterdam where he notes:

'The pins that hold small tiny maps at Anne Frank's house,

Like the maze of a man's face scarred from childhood.

The girl with short black hair, glass and fag in hand,

Next to the suave Dutchman who is dying to have her',

or 'this body and soul relationship' in which

'The two eyebrows ... are two feathers from the 12th century

Light they are,

Yet heavy with words.'

These poems do not always make comfortable reading; there are 'fountains of blood,' 'floods of tears', explosions. Here is someone with a brain he tells us

'Other times

[is] a poet searching for a word

Sharp as an Arabian sword.'

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Nowt But Verse, cont'd

But there is also passion, for his homeland, its people, *all* people; for markets, and food, and flowers, and sex, and the craft of writing (at which he excels):

'Love is a poem you perfect for months

And like an ardent and sexually demanding young lover

Always wants more of you.'

And what about that couscous? I was delighted Amir gave me permission to quote in my most recent book [Reflections: A poet-theologian in Lockdown Leeds](#) (Maytree Press/Leeds Church Institute, 2021) from the titular poem of his first collection. It is a tongue in cheek apology for the myriad of concepts, inventions, words, colours that Arabic culture has shared with the western world. We are, he says,

'sorry for everything

That we have caused humanity to suffer from.

Sorry for Algebra and the letter X.

Sorry for all the words we throw at you;

Amber, candy, chemistry, cotton, giraffe, hazard,

Jar, jasmine, jumper, lemon, lime, lilac.'

I guarantee you will not be sorry if you join us on 16th April to hear this brilliant, humane poet discuss and read his poetry.

To hear Hannah and Amir in conversation, join us for Nowt But Verse on Friday 16th April, 1pm via Zoom. This is a free event but please [register on the link](#) so that you receive your Zoom joining details.

Guests for this year's **Nowt But Verse** have been Ruth Kelsey, Sharena Lee Satti and Jeff Cottrill. In May, we'll chat to well known chronicler of the Otley Run, Joe Williams. Nowt But Verse takes place on the third Friday of the month and tickets can be booked through the Library's [website](#).





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Events. Celebrate International Dylan Thomas Day at The Leeds Library.

Celebrate the genius of Dylan Thomas between 2-4 pm on Friday 14th May, at the annual Dylan Thomas Day event hosted on Zoom by the Leeds Library where your hosts will be Patrick Lodge and Hannah Stone.

There will be readings of original contemporary work from a brand-new Indigo Dreams Publishing anthology, *Dear Dylan*, and readings from Thomas poems by fellow enthusiasts. Use the Eventbrite link below to book your place in advance so that you receive your codes to get into the Zoom room. The Zoom link will be sent out on Thursday 13th May at 6pm and then again at midday on Friday 14th May. Please check you spam folder as these emails sometimes go there.



If you wish to offer a reading of your favourite Thomas poem contact Patrick on patricklodge1@gmail.com no later than 30th April so he can arrange the schedule. Unfortunately the numbers of those reading will be limited so we may not be able to include everyone.

This is a free event with an option to donate to the Leeds Library and you can register on the [Eventbrite link here](#).

Please pre-order your copies of *Dear Dylan* direct from [Indigo Dreams](#).

Find out more about Dylan Thomas and the many other events that are taking place from <https://www.discoverdylanthomas.com/>.





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Services You Can Access From Home - 1

Digital Academy Courses with The Idler

You can access a range of online learning courses courtesy of the Idler from your home or anywhere. You will need to click on the link to register or copy and paste it into your browser:

<https://www.idler.co.uk/my/join-team/0c7ed1c053b434cbba8ba318ca95bdfd>

To help you register for the service, watch the simple tutorial that has been produced for the benefit of Library Members: <https://youtu.be/oPnaaSrMx4>

Drama Library

We have an annual subscription to **Drama Online** allowing all Library Members access to over 80 streamed productions from the National Theatre, The Globe Theatre and Royal Shakespeare Company as well as a number of live audio recordings from LA Theatre Works. We are providing this service for Members at no additional cost and we hope that it will provide you all with hours of theatrical entertainment at a time when some Members are restricted in visiting the Library to access our audio-visual collections.

To access Drama Online please follow the following instructions:

1. Go to the www.dramaonlinelibrary.com website.
2. Click on the login button at the top of the screen.
3. Scroll down to the **Library Card Number** box (ignore the Username/ Password boxes) and type in TheLeedsLibraryxxxx. Where the xxx is shown here, replace it with your 4 digit membership number, ignore any "A" letters. Membership numbers with less than 4 digits need to have a zero or zeros in front of them to make them up to 4 digits. For example: 12 needs to be 0012, 123 needs to be 0123 but 1234 is fine. This access is unique to your membership and cannot be used by anyone else.



4. When you have accessed the Leeds Library sponsored page, clicking on the **Video** link will provide access to the theatre performances, whilst clicking on **Audio** will give access to the LA Theatre works plays.

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Services You Can Access From Home - 2

eBooks Library

Did you know that we have an eBooks library? Many of you have already signed up and are using the service. Currently we have 619 titles available (including some audiobooks) and we are adding more books regularly, all of which you can download for free.

Most of our selections so far have been informed by your requests and reading habits, as well as some classics, but please let us have your suggestions and we will see what we can do. Recent popular reads have been *Too Much And Never Enough* by President Donald Trump's niece Mary L. Trump, *The Art Of Taking It Easy* by Dr Brian King, *The Lacuna* by Barbara Kingsolver and once again *The Mermaid of Black Conch* by Monique Roffey, winner of the 2020 Costa Book Award.



We have set a limit of 3 books per Member to ensure that as many of you as possible can borrow and we would ask that once you have read a book, you return it to the collection so that other Members can access it.

To access the eBooks library:

Download the Libby app which is the e-reader (unfortunately, you can't use Kindle): [google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.overdrive.mobile.android.libby&hl=en_GB](https://www.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.overdrive.mobile.android.libby&hl=en_GB)

To go straight to our online library click on this link: <https://theleedslibrary.overdrive.com/>

Or go through Libby <https://libbyapp.com/library/theleedslibrary> and follow the prompts to find **The Leeds Library**.

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Services You Can Access From Home - 3

eBooks Library, cont'd

Sign in using your email address (as your card number) and your 4-digit membership number as your PIN (*see below for more help on this), then browse the eBooks library collection and borrow a title.

N.B. If you have a couple or family membership and have only ever provided us with one email address and you want your own eBooks account, you will need to give us a second email address.

*If you can't remember your membership number, it may be on a sticky label on your door card. Let us know if you need to be reminded of the number or the email address we have for you. Membership numbers with less than 4 digits need to have a zero or zeros in front of them to make them up to 4 digits. For example: 12 needs to be 0012, 123 needs to be 0123 but 1234 is fine. If you have a couple or family membership, you need to include the letter in the membership number also. For example: 12A needs to change to 0012A and 123A needs to be 0123A.



Members' Forum

Join our online community Forum and stay in touch with each other and exchange news and ideas. We have dozens of threads created by staff and Members. Examples are current reading, book reviews, free resources to do from home, Library memories and our popular Word of the Day. We now have over 140 Members and we would love you to join us there too.

It takes just seconds to register here: <https://theleedslibrary.freeforums.net>

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Services You Can Access From Home - 4

PressReader

The excellent PressReader database gives you instant online access to over 7,000 magazines and newspapers straight to whatever device/s you use.

Please contact counter@theleedslibrary.org.uk and the Library Services team will send you the link to access this fantastic resource.

Postal Loans



The Postal Loans service allows you to have up to 10 items (books, DVDs, magazines, talking books) delivered to your door by the Royal Mail. There is a small charge to cover the costs of packaging and postage only.

These are the charges: £3.00 for up to 3 items to be posted to you; £6.00 for between 4 and 10 items to be posted to you.

This is how to request a postal loan:

1. Reserve items from our catalogue via the website in the usual way, ensuring you add a note specifying that your request is for a postal loan: <https://www.theleedslibrary.org.uk/search/>

Or

Email counter@theleedslibrary.org.uk with your list of requests.

Instructions on how to log on and make a request can be found on the Search the catalogue page on the website.

N.B. Some items may be on loan, reserved for another Member or offsite, but we will inform you if this is the case to allow you to select another item.

2. Once you have selected the items you would like, please make your payment by clicking on the red DONATE button at the top right hand corner of the website home page and using a bank or charge card, adding a note identifying your membership number and name.

3. Your parcel will be sent to you as soon as possible by 2nd class post.

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Services You Can Access From Home - 5

Click and Collect

From Monday 12 April, our Click and Collect service will resume during Library opening hours. Please contact the Library first before arriving so we can make sure that your items are ready to collect from the entrance foyer. You may also return books to the crate in the foyer where they will be quarantined for 24 hours.

We are unable to process any book requests at the time of your visit so please contact us in advance with any requests, either by reserving through the catalogue or by email or phone. We will need 48 hours' notice in order to retrieve items for you and get them ready to collect.

We have found that sometimes we have had requests for items which turn out to be on loan, if this happens we will contact you and ask if there is an alternative title you would like instead or perhaps we could recommend books for you based on your borrowing record if you are stuck for ideas.

Updated Service! Delivery and Collection

We are no longer offering our delivery service but would request Members use our postal service from now on. We are, however, offering a temporary collection service until the end of May. If you can't get into the Library to return your items or there's no one else who can drop them off for you and you live in an area where Leeds City Council collects your bins, we will collect them for you if it's possible. Collections will be on Thursdays between midday and 4pm with the cut off time for booking a collection of 3pm on the Wednesday before. There are 12 slots per Thursday afternoon but we are unable to allocate you a time so you will need to be at home for the collection. Please contact the Library Counter team on counter@theleedslibrary.org.uk or call 0113 245 3071 from Monday 12th April to arrange your collection. The first collection will be on Thursday 19th April.

Returning Books to the Library

If it is safe for you to do so, you may return any loaned items to the Library during opening hours. Anyone can return loaned items on your behalf, they do not have to be a Member. If you have a problem returning items to us, we will try and arrange collection for you. If you are unable to get to the Library and would like an extension on your loans at any time, please get in touch and we'll arrange that for you.



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Zooming with the Leeds Library Book Club

For our March Book Club, we read ***The Mermaid of Black Conch*** by Monique Roffey (Peepal, 2020) winner of the Costa Book of the Year 2020.



It's 1976 on the island of Black Conch in the Caribbean and fisherman David Baptiste is out in his pirogue fishing, playing his guitar and singing to the waves when he gets the shock of his life. Up pops a mermaid, Aycayia drawn to his boat by his song. A woman from an ancient civilisation, cursed centuries ago by other women from her village to wander the oceans as a mermaid. It's a story of love, friendship, loss and loneliness. In just over 300 pages, Roffey covers themes of racism, jealousy, violence, misogyny, homophobia, masculinity, disability, colonialism and slavery. Roffey uses Creole English and interweaves poetry, journal entries and a narrator. There's a lot going on. It's very poignant in places. The imagery is wonderful. The narrative zips along despite all the heavy themes. We would have preferred one or two of the characters to tell the reader less and show us more (Miss Raine for

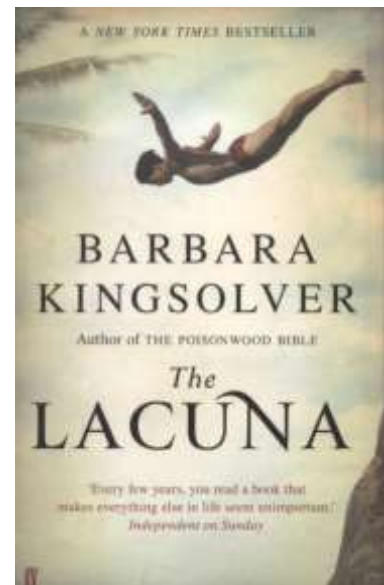
example) but we mostly enjoyed it with just one of us who really didn't like it. Magical realism stories aren't for everyone but this is a pacy tale and relatively short so well worth a read if you want to try this genre out whilst escaping to a Caribbean Island with a mermaid!

Our next Book Club is on Monday 19th April, 5.30pm, reading ***The Lacuna*** by Barbara Kingsolver (2010), winner of the Orange Prize.

We'll Zoom our discussion and if you would like to join us then please email: gellf@theleedslibrary.org.uk and you will be sent a Zoom link nearer the time.

Copies of all the Book Club choices are available for free download on our [eBooks Library](#) platform or to borrow from the collection.

You can find out more about what we thought about all the books we have read on the Members' [Forum](#) in the Book Club thread. Please feel free to post your own comments there too if you have read any of the books we have covered.

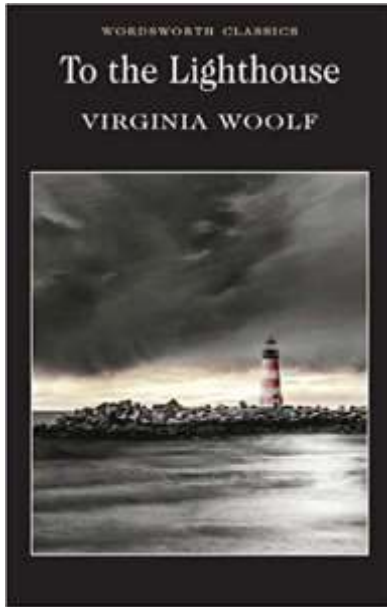




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The Tuesday Morning Book Club



For our March book, we read *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf a member of the famous Bloomsbury group. Written in 1927 this 'modernist book' is considered to be her most accomplished and autobiographical work.

To the Lighthouse is a book in three parts or movements: All of it is set at the summer home of the Ramsay family on the Isle of Skye, comprising the middle-aged Ramsay family and their eight children and various house guests. The first part occupies an afternoon and evening, the second an interlude of ten years when the house is unoccupied, and the last the morning when they finally get to visit the lighthouse.

The first section, *the Window*, sets the central story. The Ramsey's son James wants to take a boat out to visit the Lighthouse, but his father says that the weather will not

allow this – maybe tomorrow?

The second section, *Time Passes*, reduces ten years of 'action' into a chapter in which several of the characters die and the First World War takes place.

The final section, *The Lighthouse*, sees James as a young man and finally making the trip with his sister and father to the lighthouse.

Margaret Attwood has written an excellent [review](#) of the book in which she reflects on the difference between reading a book as a young person and then when you are old or older!

Everyone enjoyed the book and commented on the quality of the writing and the complexity of the novel. Comments were made: 'A novel in which nothing seems to happen and the action is all in people's heads' and 'how much do we really know about other people and their thoughts'. I particularly enjoyed the description of the house in the years of decay and neglect.

A key phrase in the book was: 'Women can't write and women can't paint.' Art is of course fundamental to the novel. The theme of Lily's painting and its possible meanings (Mrs Ramsay in the end is a purple triangle) tie the book together and Lily has a revelation that enables her to complete the painting just as Mr Ramsay lands at the lighthouse. The painting, the trip and the novel finish together.

The painting and the trip have taken years to materialise, a time interposed by a number of deaths amongst the characters and WW1. Virginia Woolf's explorations of art in relation to literature and the struggles of the creative process permeate the novel and the writing is intensely visual.



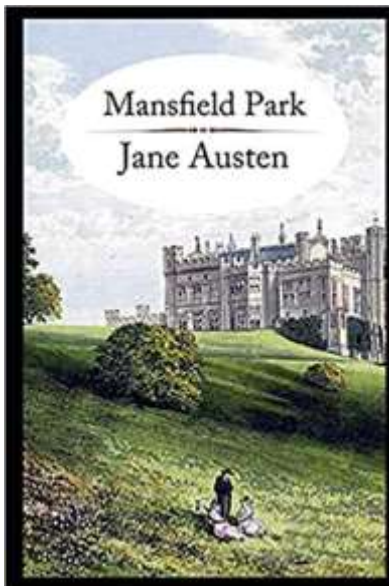
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The Tuesday Morning Book Club, cont'd

Could Virginia Woolf have been an artist or was she constrained by her gifted sister Vanessa Bell? We discussed these much studied topics but then for light relief talked about the Bloomsbury Group farmhouse Charleston, the attitudes to the servants, the decor and the stunning recent gift of those notorious Duncan Grant studies. Passed around and hidden for sixty years by the gay community, the 400 or so drawings have been given to Charleston after the theatre designer Norman Coates thought there must be a better place for them than under his bed. An odyssey as strange in its way as *To the Lighthouse*.

By Ann Suter.



For its April discussion, the Tuesday Book Club chose ***Mansfield Park*** by Jane Austen.

The novel was first published in 1814, and consensus of the group was that it was the most interesting, complex and challenging of all Austen's major novels.

As we would expect, we find love and marriage, property, money, social position, the position of women, and the importance of proper parenting, upbringing and education are all addressed in this novel, as in her others. – the latter treated very seriously indeed, and in detail. But in none of the others is there such an exploration of contrasts between relative poverty and wealth, the power of patriarchy, the importance and symbolism of place and home, the contrast between town and country, the best and worst aspects of the navy

and its system of patronage, the origin of Sir Thomas Bertram's wealth from his estate in Antigua, and the growing influence of Evangelicalism within the Church. Above all, its deeply serious and high moral tone make it stand out from the rest of her oeuvre.

Our heroine, Fanny Price, embodies this deep moral earnestness. She shows that purity of heart, upright moral principles and integrity of action can win out over wealth, cleverness, wit and social position. From being an outsider, she comes to be the moral compass of Mansfield Park and the guardian of its best values. She is a Cinderella figure, poor, powerless, dependent, the victim of a bullying aunt, little regarded, silent and excessively timid and self-effacing. A reader found her and Edmund Bertram hard to swallow. One contributor called Edmund an "awful prig". Choosing such a problematic heroine was a daring experiment for Austen.

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The Tuesday Morning Book Club, cont'd

However, Fanny's passivity allows her to bring into sharp contrast some of the most vividly realized characters of any of her novels: Aunt Norris, for example, and the brilliantly gifted Crawfords – fully drawn, utterly believable and fatally attractive, but also tainted. They are the disruptors and transgressors of *Mansfield Park* at the time when it is full of unresolved tensions, and they create a chaos which is only resolved at the end of the novel – and a knowingly perfunctory one at that!

This novel stimulated a very lively and interesting discussion within the group – about Mrs Norris, for example. Everyone agreed that she was repulsive, but there was a great deal of sympathy for the difficult position such dependent women occupied in a patriarchal society. Indeed, the paramount importance for women of securing an establishment wealthy enough to support them is placed before the reader in the very first sentence of the novel.

Other themes noted were the contrasts drawn between the morally corrupting influence of London and the edifying influence of the countryside and nature – though a Nature seen through pre-Romantic eyes – and the emphasis on the importance and desirability of “tranquillity” though in a novel in which there is an extraordinary amount of movement.

We also noted the masterly handling of the set-pieces such as the visit to Sotherton, the rehearsals for “Lovers' Vows” and the Portsmouth episode.

Everyone agreed that this novel is a masterpiece. Some of the group were returning to it after a gap of thirty or forty years and had found it an infinitely rewarding read. So, if it has lain on your bookshelf for many years, we can recommend that you seek it out and read it with fresh eyes!

By Christine Stead.

The Tuesday Morning Book Club meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 10.30 am and currently by Zoom. If you wish to join a meeting please email Ann at suter.pamelaann@gmail.com for details.

The next books are:

4th May, *A Perfect Spy* by John Le Carre

1st June, *Goldmund and Narsizz* by Herman Hesse

6th July, *The Goldfinch* by Donna Tartt

3rd August *Candide* by Voltaire - preferably Penguin Classics edition trans. Theo Cuffe.

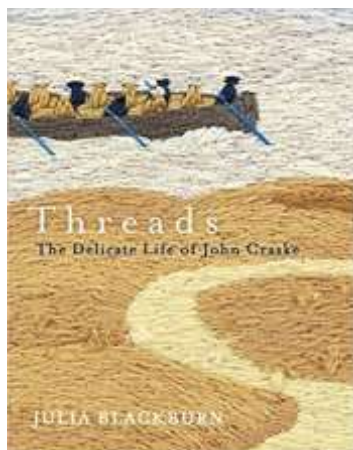


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Book Reviews

Threads: The Delicate Life of John Craske by Julia Blackburn, Jonathan Cape, 2015, 352 pp. Reviewed by Lucy Evans.



Why is this a “delicate life”? This is the first of the many puzzles of Julia Blackburn’s book and there are no short answers to any of them.

What is the relevance of Einstein, his saviour Locker-Lampson the leader of the Blue Shirts, old Mr Hagger, the German professor on the bicycle who was not Einstein, the Elephant Man, the Norfolk Giant, Arthur Van Norman, the Prince of Clowns, someone called Peter and his parrot Freddie, an artist called Hans, Cesare Lombroso, the retired healer plumber Basil, Granny Cats and Keith, and the philosophic fisherman from Cromer?

And the places – what is the relevance of the Museum of Memories in Great Yarmouth, the Egyptian Soul House in Turin, Trellick Tower in London, Somerton Church ‘adrift on the vast ocean of the landscape’, the Watch House on the mudflats of the Blakeney Estuary and the Salt Road of the Piedmont mountains?

Just as *Moby Dick* is rather more than a story of a whale hunt, *Threads* is rather more than a biography of John Craske. It is also rather similar to *Moby Dick* in that the reader is plunged into the violence of ocean tides, winds, coasts and depths, the incomprehensively grim struggles of the fishing boats to capture the great spawning shoals of herring, mackerel and sprats. The reader is also plunged into Julia Blackburn’s personal world of loss, trauma, memory, exploration and grief, the borderlands of life and death that Craske too inhabits.

John Craske (1881-1943) was a Norfolk fisherman who fell into a mysterious illness in 1917 that left him drifting for months at a time in ‘a stuporous state’, kept alive by his devoted wife. The doctors could only offer that the sea might cure him and so he lived for the most part within sight of the North Sea. From his bed he painted and embroidered the boats, sea and coast, his masterpiece being a colossal embroidery *The Evacuation of Dunkirk*. Like Alfred Wallis, the Cornish fisherman artist, his works were discovered and appreciated. Sylvia Townsend Warner, her partner Valentine Ackland, Peter Pears and the wealthy American Elizabeth Wade White were the foremost admirers but much has been scattered and neglected.

Like Craske in the margins of living, Julia Blackburn lets herself drift in a desultory search for the man and his works. This is not a linear or focused biography but a strange dream-like meander yet sharp with incidental detail of places, people and the weird encounters of life. Julia Blackburn describes in the book how her thoughts, even of the abstract, are intensely visual and much is seen through the medium of art works.

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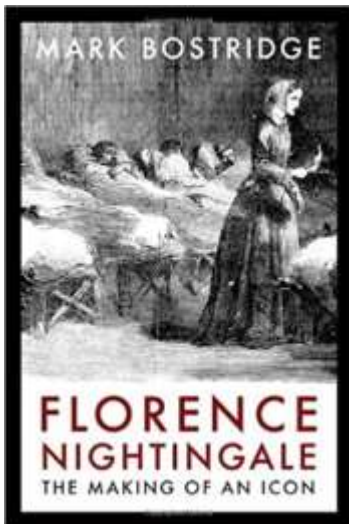
Book Reviews

Threads: The Delicate Life of John Craske, cont'd

It is an immensely beautiful book, both in the writing and in the superb photographs. Many feature Craske's paintings and embroideries, the interiors of the Shell Museum where several reside, and there is even one of the immensely odd whale pond, decorated with shells, from their East Dereham garden.

Threads won the East Anglian Book of the Year in 2015. It is a strange book that should perhaps be approached as poetry rather than prose.

Florence Nightingale - The Making of an Icon by Mark Bostridge, published by Farrer, Straus and Giroix, New York, 2008, 672 pp. Reviewed by Roger Taylor.



Mention Florence Nightingale and the image of the Lady with the Lamp is the iconic image. I have never liked the word iconic, but in Florence's case it was apt.

In her upper middle class world, women performed a fixed social role, made a good marriage, to money or a good family, had children and repeated the cycle. Education was not suitable for women, not being capable of such things, according to the men in control. They could do good works, but not too many, as society might frown upon her and her family.

Born on the 12th May 1820, in Italy, she showed her future by bandaging and nursing her dolls. She had above average intellect. Her father, William, unusually encouraged her learning. Florence grew a strong Christian, always questioning her views of God and the world's natural laws. She was desperate to do something with her life, in the service of God, helping the poor. This developed into nursing. Female nursing started on the Continent, with the development of sisterhoods, providing nursing training with, in Florence's mind, a calling in religious terms. Nursing standards were then non-existent, being reasonable to extremely low.

Florence wanted middle class women to be called, providing an outlet for their need to be of use, instead of doing nothing. Florence's mother and sister were totally against this – what would people think! During years of parental and social objection, she travelled extensively, often visiting hospitals and similar institutions. Florence attended courses at the pioneering centre at Kaisersworth, Germany, helping her decide what she could do and making use of her excellent connections.

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Book Reviews

Florence Nightingale, cont'd

Florence's ideas had gained an audience. The war in the Crimea, covered by newspaper correspondents, created a public outcry the way the wounded British soldiers were dealt with, or rather not. The Army medical structure was riddled with complacency and negligence.

Enter Florence, who with a small team of nurses went to Scutari Hospital, which was badly run, filthy and with inadequate sanitation. Here Florence and her team improved Scutari, organising and improving things at some cost to her own physical welfare. It was here, doing her rounds with her lamp, she created the iconic image.

Florence returned home, deciding to improve Army medical services. A Royal Commission was created and with her personal efforts, the situation improved. Her fame led to people seeking her advice which she was not shy in giving especially in improving basic sanitation.

Florence never married, devoting her life to her task to serve people and God. Ultimately her mother and sister became reunited with her. Florence lived an isolated life. She had poor health, suffering from brucellosis contracted in the Crimea. She lived in hotels, rooms and friends' houses in London and the country. She refused to see people, staying in bed when often indisposed; perhaps as a shield against the fame, forced upon her, but which she craved, pushing her ideas through her favourite, well connected people.

One sometimes forgotten side of Florence was the impeccable detail of her work. She did detailed research and gathered accurate information from people. Florence was one of the first to use the new art of statistics. Her "Cockscomb" charts are amongst the first use of what we know as Pie Charts, illustrating military death rates and causes.

Sometimes acidic in her comments and destructive of personal relationships, she was a person who used people to achieve her ends. She was also a woman of amazing and organised intellect, with a human side and capable of intense emotional feelings.

This is a long and rather heavy book, but it gave me more knowledge and insight into Florence Nightingale than I had ever had before, well worth the effort of reading it and highly recommended.



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Members' Articles

Undiscovered Trifles by Michael Meadowcroft



Even as a child I was a library addict but I had been back in Yorkshire for some years before I discovered the Leeds Library. It was Martin Banham, then Professor of Drama at Leeds University, who introduced me to the Library, having met when we both campaigned from 1968 for the establishment of a Leeds Playhouse. In those days membership was limited strictly to 500 "Proprietors" and even the later concept of "Associate Members" without voting rights had yet to be envisaged. One had to buy an available share and there was often a waiting list - hence the notice board still in the main room. As it happens I slid in very swiftly and bought share 412 in October 1973.

The then patrician style of administration was embedded in a time warp. The great and the good of Leeds were very much in charge and the concept of contested elections for the committee clearly did not impinge too vividly on the existing members - as I discovered when I quixotically stood for election in protest at the 125 year commercial lease without a break clause that we were lumbered with in 1976. The then President, Dr Trevor Hall, informed the Members in rather hurt tones that "because Mr Meadowcroft has put himself forward we have had to have an election". Presumably the fifteen retiring members standing for re-election could not be held responsible for the contest. There was a decided sense of glee in Dr Hall's voice as announced the expected derisory vote I obtained and "declared all the candidates elected - except for Mr Meadowcroft"!

Early on whilst still bemused by our Aladdin's cave of books I was struck by the many books on familiar subjects that I was unaware of. It was not, of course, easy to spot them given the curious system of classifying books based on shelf marks. The globally known and hugely familiar Dewey Decimal system only arrived in Commercial Street somewhat later. It was also a long time before the catalogue was available online and it was a case of wading through the boxes of cards to discover what undiscovered trifles were somewhere on the stated shelf.

I was already much interested in Leeds political history and in 1975 I embarked on my MPhil studies in *Transition in Leeds City Government 1903 to 1926*. Amongst the treasures I discovered were the four bound volumes of *Morrison's Blue Book and City Record*. These contain comprehensive election details from the first town council contests of 1835 and a hoard of other municipal material. They were only published from 1904 to 1931 and must be extremely rare as in my fifty years of book collecting I have ever found three copies! As long as no-one else wanted these volumes I was allowed to keep renewing them and I had them out for some two years! **Cont/**



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Members' Articles

Undiscovered Trifles, cont'd

The other jewels I eventually came across were the volumes of the annual Leeds *Record of Current Events* published by the redoubtable Fred R Spark, who was secretary of the Leeds Musical Festival for fifty years. These annual volumes followed on from the three volumes of *Mayhall's Annals of Yorkshire* which concluded in 1874. Spark filled the gap with his well indexed and invaluable publications providing an easy reference point for local events until William Benn took up the task in 1880. I was rather tardy in discovering Fred Spark's work because they are bound within a number of different volumes with the rubric *Leeds Tracts* on each spine. For years I assumed that these *Tracts* contained within the variably bound collections were religious and, not wishing to pursue theological exegeses, I passed them by. It was only when librarian Anna Goodridge pointed me to the appropriate *Tracts* volume for an item within the catalogue that I discovered the eclectic cornucopia of pamphlets and other items within. I have returned to them on many occasions since though I very much feel that Fred Spark's five annual volumes should really be brought together in a single dedicated volume.

I have books on every floor of my former mill house in Bramley, including the cellar, and I have a pretty good collection of material on my various highly eclectic interests, not just politics and history, but also jazz and French classic philately! I don't think anyone starts out with the aim of having a "library" - it just happens as the books take over. I happen to believe that there is no need to buy clothes when one can buy books but, as over the years I became increasingly financially embarrassed I began to use the Library more and more. Now after almost fifty years of membership, I appreciate it more than ever.





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Members' Articles

Enchanted by Speech by Melanie Chan

Burrowing into the collection at the Leeds Library unearthed science fiction stories that offered insight into the Covid-19 pandemic and life under lockdown. *Station Eleven* (2014) by Emily St. John Mandel is a post-apocalyptic novel, set in the wake of year zero (also called the collapse) after a flu epidemic has killed most of the world's population. Yet there are moments of joy in the novel, as a band of travelling performers musicians bring song and dance to the places they visit as they travel across North America. Another science fiction story which seems to illuminate the growth of digital communications, especially Zoom (video conferencing) is *The Machine Stops* by E.M Forster (1909). At the same time as reading these science fiction stories, I came across non-fictional books about conversation such as Stephen Miller's *Conversation: A History of a Declining Art* (2006) and Sherry Turkle's *Reclaiming Conversation* (2015).

Out of this intense reading period and inspired by recent events, I produced a science fiction short story, [The Enchantment of Speech](#), which is part of an online project called Terra Two. The short story is set in a near future in which digital communication threatens to diminish speech. The story was written at a time when our opportunities for face-to-face conversation was drastically reduced. Yet at the same time our screen-based interactions dramatically increased, providing vital social connection. *The Enchantment of Speech* invites us to imagine what would happen if we stopped talking to one another. On the other hand, it also offers an optimistic vision as the main character, Sono comes across archive footage of speech. Through this archive footage, Sono learns to talk and starts to relish the physical experience of speaking.



Research conducted during the pandemic and lockdown of 2020 reveals that voice calls increased in the United States because people wanted to hear the voice of family and friends because this provided comfort and reassurance. Indeed, an article in the *New York Times* by Cecilia Kang states that AT & T found that '...the number of cellular calls had risen 35 per cent and that Wi-Fi based calls had nearly doubled.' Therefore,

speech has not been overtaken by texting or social media posts which suggests that we are still enchanted by speech. Image from Canva.com.

You can read the *Enchantment of Speech* [here](#).



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