

Footnotes

November 2021 News from the Library of Innerpeffray



The Library of Innerpeffray

Opening Lines

Welcome to our winter newsletter which includes a look back at the first Festival of Reading, with many thanks to all who took part. Thank you too to everyone who sent us a Postcard to Reading—we have enjoyed reading them all and there's still time to post them back. In September we also partnered with Crieff and Strathearn museum last month for Doors Open Days with a Roman theme, our thanks to the Antonine Guard for some live action legionaries and to David Willington for his talks on Roman Strathearn.



We celebrated the 100th birthday of George Mackay Brown with a special display from the Scottish Collection and an afternoon of poetry—more about this below.

As the nights grow darker we are delighted to welcome back the storytelling genius of Nunkie Theatre with two tales from MR James on 11th November—in the Library or view from home on Zoom.

This is followed by two days of Christmas shopping in the Innerpeffray schoolroom at our Christmas Fayre—extended from last year to include local food and drink produce to buy as well as advance ordering for delivery to your home. The Fayre takes place from 10am—4pm on Fri 12th and Sat 13th November.

What happens at Innerpeffray in the winter? Find out more about our programme of conservation and go behind the scenes with the Keeper on page 3.

All events can be booked by telephone as well as online, so do feel free to call me. The Library closed on Sunday 31st October for the winter will be open again on 2nd March 2022. I hope to see you soon.

Best wishes *Lara*

George Mackay Brown 100th Birthday and the Innerpeffray Lecture



On 17th October 2021 it was the 100th birthday of Orkney writer and poet, George Mackay Brown. Innerpeffray welcomed poets John Glenday, Andy Jackson, Beth McDonough, Jim Mackintosh and Julie McNeill for an afternoon of readings from the writer's work. **It was a very special event and as well as readings from Mackay Brown's writings we also heard from a new anthology of poetry published to mark the centenary.**

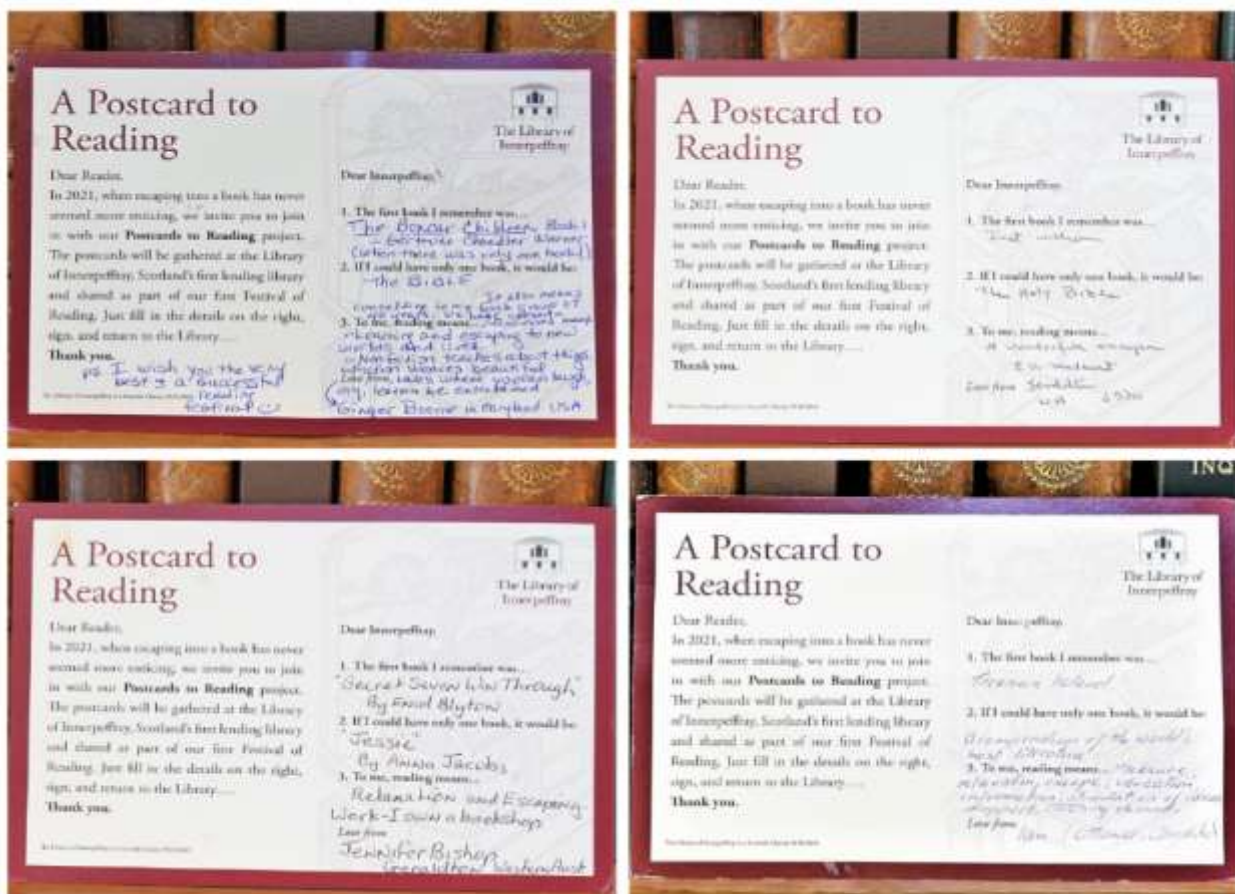
Julie McNeill also read a premier of her poem *An Evening at Innerpeffray* inspired by her last visit as part of the **Festival of Reading**. **We're delighted to say that Julie and ten other poets have given permission for their poems to be included in a new anthology to be published by the Library - available at the Christmas Fayre and soon on the website. (See back page.)**

We are also delighted to announce that Jim Mackintosh will be giving the **Innerpeffray Lecture** on Thursday 24th February. Jim will tell us more about the life and work of George Mackay Brown, as well as the idea for a celebration volume of poetry **Beyond the Swelkie**, published by Tippermuir books and edited by Jim Mackintosh and Paul Phillipou. Put the date in your diary now.

Festival of Reading

Last week I spent a delightful few days at the Library of Innerpefferay's inaugural Festival of Reading! From Wednesday 8th to Saturday 11th September 2021, Innerpefferay hosted eight Tayside writers to celebrate the Past on the Page, in celebration of the 250th anniversary of the birth of Sir Walter Scott.

In the run up to the festival, the library started the 'A Postcard to Reading' project – a campaign to collect information about reading with participants filling out postcards and sending them in the post from wherever they live. There has been a fantastic uptake and the library has received responses from all over the world – with the furthest so far from Canada and Australia! Some of the first books people remember have been *The Wind in the Willows*, *Little Grey Rabbit*, and *Winnie the Pooh*. The most popular book choices have been *The Bible*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings*. And miles ahead of any other answer, the most oft-cited response to 'What does reading mean to you?' has been escapism and education



1 Selection of 'Postcards to Reading' from readers in the USA, Australia and Canada

On Wednesday 8th September, the Festival of Reading kicked off with a brilliant conversation with nature writer and wildlife guide Tom Bowser. Organised by the Friends of Innerpefferay Library, in this event Tom discussed the realities of rewilding Scotland through his award-winning Argaty Red Kite project and his 2021 book, *A Sky Full of Kites*, published by Birlinn. The subject of potentially reintroducing beavers to Scotland certainly divided the audience.

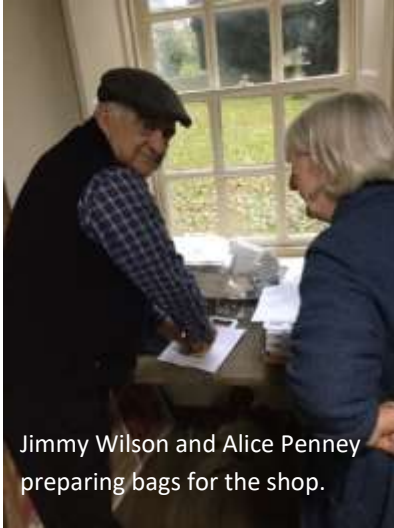
Isla MacFarlane

Read Isla's full description of the Festival on our blog—or contact Lara for a paper copy.

We look forward to bringing the Festival to Innerpefferay next September.

The Dusting Diary or Behind the Scenes with the Keeper

Throughout the months of November—February Innerpeffray Library is closed to visitors: but we are not curled up with a book in the front of the fire! In fact some of the most important jobs of the year are done in the closed season. The ‘Innerpeffairies’ are hard at work.



Jimmy Wilson and Alice Penney preparing bags for the shop.

As well as a programme of winter events (which can involve a lot of helpers shifting a lot of chairs), some of my favourite tasks of the year take place in the winter.

It is a very sociable time of year, when our volunteer team get together instead of being spread out across the week. We have regular sessions that are essential to our conservation programme.

We take every book off the shelf, give it a careful dust, brushing the top from the spine to the edge with soft bristle, check for damage and clean the shelf itself. The books are logged against the catalogue, then replaced, in the correct order on the shelf. We have over five thousand books, so this takes a little while. Some of the larger books have a ‘holiday’ off the shelf to air them, this prevents moulds forming, which will take their toll on

paper and bindings alike.

This ‘dusting time’ is also a great chance to look at books, finding inspiration for exhibitions, lovely woodcuts or special bindings and occasionally hidden treasure—like the time we discovered a series of love letter notes to a mystery lady in the margins of a 17th century book.

During this time we also replace all the books that have been on display for the year - and prepare a new exhibition. Our exhibition aims to tell a story, and in addition to the practical steps of which books to show, descriptive labels and suitable cushions, stands and supports, I produce a narrative to help the team to guide visitors around the exhibition in the year ahead.

The 2022 exhibition will centre on Innerpeffray connections to innovation and invention: beginning with the innovation of the Library itself, and telling the story, for example, of Robert Stirling of Cloag near Methven, who borrowed books from the Library in the early 19th century and invented the Stirling heat exchange engine, a ground breaking technology used by NASA today. Phillip Hills’ book, *The Star Engine*, published this year by Birlinn books tells the amazing story in full (copies available in our shop).

This winter we will also be launching our new online catalogue and the team will be familiarising themselves with the new system before it goes live. I’d like to thank Stephen Rawles very much for all his contributions to this process.



Bill Gray with a copy of the Scots Magazine that needs a repair.

Thank you to our Patrons

Hugh Arbuthnott, Patricia Barnes, Steven Bevan, Charles Q Boyer, Martin Boyle, Arabella Connell, Lisa Dickson, Jill Dye, Isobel Falconer, Gillean Ford, Angus Gordon, Kenneth Graham, Anne Gray, Bill Gray, Martin Haldane, Steph Haxton, Richard Holmes, Janet Law, Edwina Lugg, Ursula Martin, Ann McIntosh, Peter Parke, Liz Pamplin, Donald Piper, Lucy Poett, Suzetta Rankin, Tony Ross, Jean Ann Scott Miller, Alistair Scouller, Liam Sims, Robert Skilleter, Joan Taylor, Norman Taylor, Kirsty Thomson, Chris Torlach, Anne Wade, John D Watson, John Wilson, and those who wish to remain anonymous. To become a Patron or join FOIL, please contact us.

Poems for Innerpeffray

The Library of Innerpeffray has been a place of inspiration for centuries: the subject of stories, plays, paintings, photographs and poetry, many people have tried to capture the very special feeling that this unique place in history brings to those who visit. We are delighted that this year we have been able to produce an anthology of 'Poems for Innerpeffray'. Seventeen poems from eleven poets are brought together in this volume and are accompanied by beautiful photographs by Duncan McEwan and Jo Cound, we hope you will enjoy reading many different angles of inspiration these pieces evoke. As a taster, here is Gillean Ford's poem—The Visitor.

The Visitor

I've come to smell the books, she said.

To trail fingers with featherlight touch across a vellum cover and read the
braille messages of centuries passed on by other book lovers.

To gently caress the silky smooth, leather-bound volumes, glistening like
bronzed skin, and then see 'Madertie' within.

Imagine five centuries, he said, of writers, printers, publishers, bookbinders
and book sellers, and those who borrowed and read.

To wander, quietly, mesmerised, among floor to ceiling shelves, lost to a book
world, and dreams, I delve into a volume and inhale time.

Gillean Ford



Carols at Innerpeffray— a word from the FOIL Convenor

FOIL has made very effort to stage the Carols in December 2021. Sadly the uncertainty regarding restrictions relating to the Covid pandemic has made this impossible. The recent news that Historic Environment Scotland will not be opening St Mary's Chapel until April 2022, at the earliest, meant that we had to find another venue; St Andrew's Church Hall, an option on previous occasions, is not available. When I considered things I came to the conclusion that Carols at Innerpeffray should be just that, as the charm and appeal of the event relies not just on the music but on the location. FOIL has had a difficult two years and the support of our members has helped us survive. We are well advanced in planning a programme for next year and Carols at Innerpeffray is scheduled for December 2022. Last year we broadcast Carols from the Library on the website. This recording will be available to view again from 1st - 24th December 2021.

Best wishes to you all, Joan Taylor