

News from the Leighton Library

No. 1 / May 2020

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter.

The idea for the newsletter came from a meeting that custodian Michael Osborne organised with volunteer guides and local friends of the museum in January. We talked about how to promote the library to both locals and potential visitors, who come from all over the world.



Everyone was enthusiastic about the library and keen to share their enthusiasm with visitors. Michael quoted some of the comments from the Visitors Book:

“Hugely interesting – wonderful to be able to touch and read these old books. Great volunteer support”
(Visitor from Strathaven)

“It’s great that you keep this lovely library open for the public – keep up your work” University of Göttingen

But guides had found that many visitors hadn’t heard much about the library and its importance:

“I’ve lived in Dunblane for years and never realised the library was here.”

“I looked online to see what was interesting to do in Dunblane but didn’t see anything about the library.”

Treasurer Chris Onslow reported that visitor numbers were down from 1,702 two years ago to 1,548 last year, which meant that visitor donations were down too. Donations are used to fund annual running costs like heating, humidity control, security, and work on the books. So we also discussed how to raise funds through fund raising events and increasing the number of Friends of the Leighton Library.



Another theme that emerged from the discussions was how we can build up the body of knowledge about Leighton, the history of the library, the books themselves, and how to share that information effectively with visitors.

The newsletter aims to provide a forum for spreading the word about this national treasure, and for keeping Friends and Volunteers up to date about developments.

The editorial team will be delighted to receive suggestions for future articles for the newsletter and ideas promoting the library. Comments, suggestions and offers to contribute articles should be sent to leightonfriends@gmail.com

We’re also looking for ideas for a name for the newsletter!

Hugh, Frances and Hazel¹ (editorial team)

In this newsletter

- Update on the 2020 season
- Conservation Plan for the exterior of the Library
- The library’s website, Facebook page, and Twitter account
- News of an excellent mini history on Bishop Leighton and his times
- Encouraging new Friends of the Leighton Library

¹ Hugh Grant, Frances Ainslie, Hazel Wilson. If you would like to help in any way, please let us know.

The 2020 Season

The library was due to open for the season on 1 May, Monday to Saturday, 11am till 1pm, until 30 September. Sadly, Covid-19 restrictions mean that the library has to remain closed for the time being. The Custodian and Trustees are keeping the situation under review.

Conservation Plan

Early this year, the Trustees submitted an application for grant funding to Historic Environment Scotland (HES). Their grant, if awarded, will be used to part fund exterior work on the building, including replacement of the render and stonework repairs; a Conservation Plan, written by Ms Sonya Linskaill (RIAS; RIBA; Conservation Architect) and submitted in support of the application, gives full details. Due to Corona virus, HES has put consideration of all grants on hold, indefinitely. When lockdown permits, an opportunity will be provided to meet Sonya.

Leighton Library on Social Media

Do recommend people to visit the Library's website where they can watch the excellent nine minute video on Leighton and the Library, and find information on the history of the Library, Leighton himself, and the books: www.leightonlibrary.org.uk

Interesting items on the books and authors are posted regularly on Facebook and Twitter: www.facebook.com/leightonlibrary
<https://twitter.com/leightonlib>

This is the one from 26 April.



Bishop Leighton and his times: a mini history

The book "Four Great Churchmen of Dunblane" by Dr Bill Inglis (Dunblane Council of Churches, 2000) is now out of print but Bill has kindly agreed to our making a transcript of the chapter on Bishop Leighton.

It is a very readable account of the different stages of Leighton's life and work, set in the context of the religious conflict that existed in 17th century Britain. It describes the courageous stand he took to lessen religious divisions, first as Bishop of Dunblane 1661-71 and then as Archbishop of Glasgow.

The chapter quotes Leighton as saying: "... *there was not that difference between the Papis (papists) and us to put us to excommunicate and condemn judge and persecute one another*". A very bold statement given the fear of Catholics at the time. And again: "*Religion did not consist in these external things whether of government or ceremonies but in righteousness, peace and joy.*"

The transcript can be found on the Library website, under the page on Leighton, or you can click [here](#) to read the article directly.

Encouraging new Friends of the Leighton Library

If you know of someone who might like to sign up as a Friend of the Leighton Library, please let them know to email leightonfriends@gmail.com for an application form. The annual subscription remains at £20. Friends receive the newsletter by email (or by mail if they prefer) and invitations to Leighton events. The subscriptions help to fund annual running costs of the library.