



Guille-Allès  
Public Library

# ANNUAL REPORT

2022

# A WORD FROM CORNELIA JAMES, CHIEF LIBRARIAN

2022 was a significant year for the Library, marking the **140th anniversary** of its founding. To celebrate this milestone we organised a **major exhibition** about our history, bringing to life the story of our founders, Thomas Guille and Frederick Allès, and showcasing some of the treasures in our collection. ***Boundless Curiosity: 140 Years of the Guille-Allès Library*** opened to the public on Friday 4 November.

The exhibition forms a key part of our ongoing Strategic Plan, which seeks to **unlock our uniqueness** and **raise the profile of the Library**. It was an immensely exciting project, and putting it together was a huge team effort from the staff – I can't thank them enough for their dedication and hard work. I'm also supremely grateful to our sponsors BDO, as well as our partners Guernsey Museums, Art for Guernsey, and the Priaulx Library, for their support in making *Boundless Curiosity* possible.

The response from the community has been overwhelming. **More than 8,500 people** came to see the exhibition, and their feedback was immensely positive. I truly believe that Mr Guille and Mr Allès would be proud of what we created – and what's more, I believe they would be proud of the whole of their Library today. They wanted the institution to be a hub for community, education, and culture, and to always be moving with the times, **responding to the changing needs of community** – and that ethos continues to underpin everything we do. The heart of the service remains reading, lifelong learning, and wellbeing, just as they would expect. And while of course they could never have imagined eBooks, or the Fab Lab, or many other core aspects of the service today, I'm confident that they would approve.

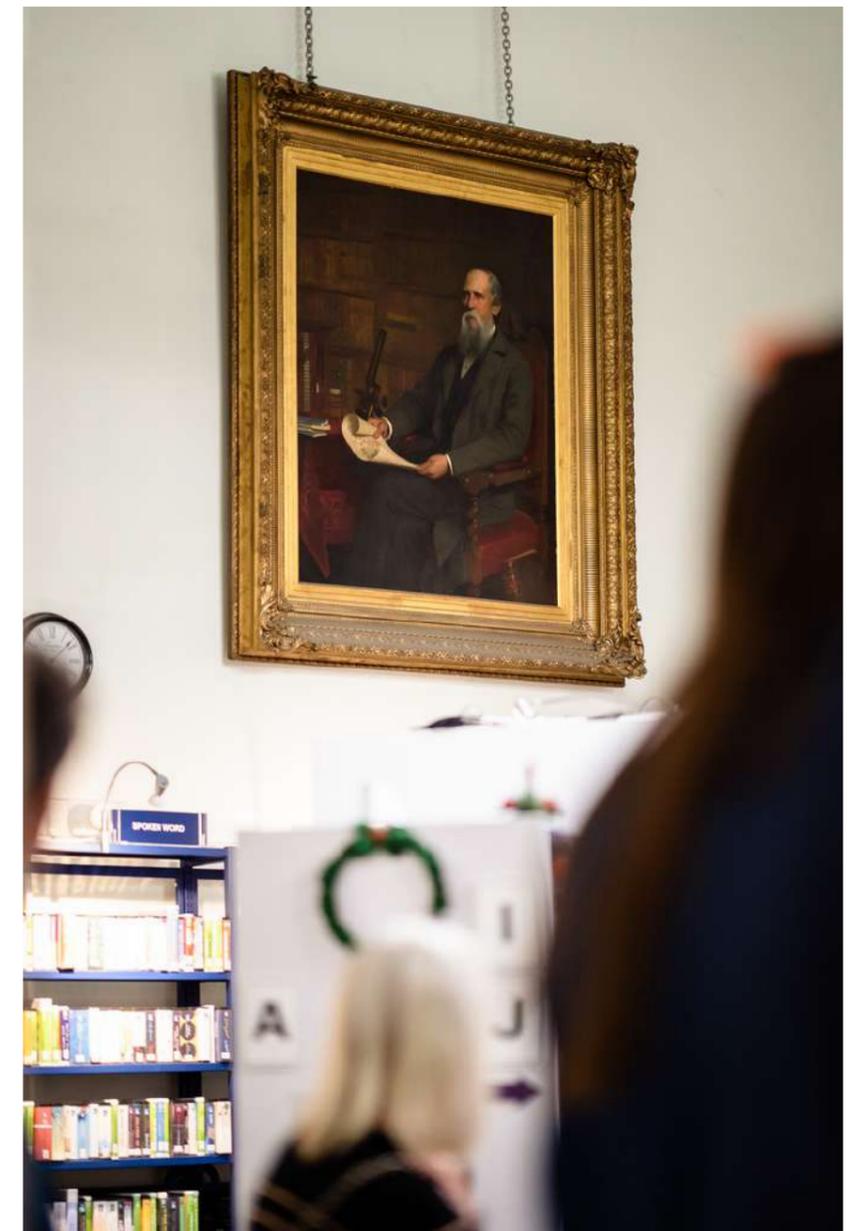


Away from the exhibition, it's been another busy year across the service. **The Guernsey Literary Festival** returned with in-person author events for the first time since 2019, 14 of which were at the Library. Meanwhile we've seen considerable growth in usage of the **Fab Lab**, and the **Children's Library** has been as busy as ever, including another popular Summer Reading Challenge.

All this activity has contributed to a significant **rise in footfall** this year. The numbers are up 10% on 2021, and 13% on 2020 – of course, those were abnormal years, but the figures are nonetheless eye-catching. Even more pleasingly, this year's total is **2% above an average year** before the pandemic. The Library hasn't just rebounded from the disruption of recent years, it is growing, thriving, and continuing to serve the community, just as its founders intended.

As always I must thank all the staff, whose passion, dedication, and hard work makes it all possible.

*Cornelia James*





# 2022 STATISTICS

152,000

visits



247,000

loans



2,120

new members



86,000

website visits



343

children's activity sessions



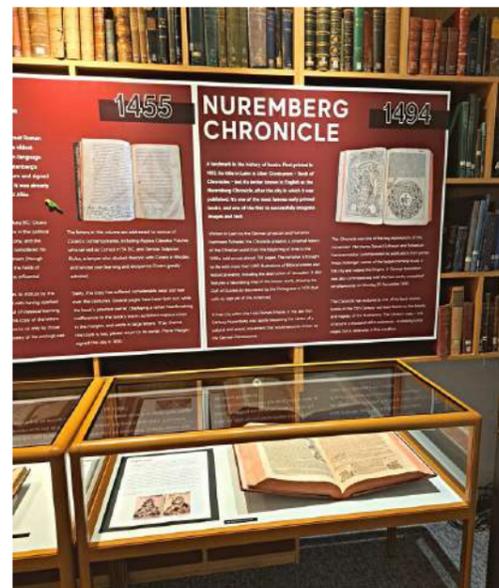
1,700

Summer Reading  
Challenge participants



*"I'm thankful  
for this place  
of beauty,  
interest, calm  
and learning  
in Town"*





# 1. EXHIBITION

*Boundless Curiosity: 140 Years of the Guille-Allès Library* opened to the public on Friday 4 November. The ‘big idea’ was to bring to life the remarkable story behind the Library’s origins, celebrating our **unique history** and the role we play in the community, and showcasing some of the **treasures** in our collection. Rare books on display included the Nuremberg Chronicle, and the star attraction, Audubon’s ***The Birds of America***, one of the rarest and most coveted books in the world. The latter’s pages were turned once a week, encouraging repeat visitors.

The launch attracted considerable publicity. There was extensive **media coverage**, with lengthy features on ITV Channel TV and BBC Radio Guernsey, pieces in Bailiwick Express and on Island FM, and a total of ten articles plus a podcast in the Guernsey Press. A four-page spread in Aurigny’s in-flight magazine, En Voyage, followed in December.

Content on the Library’s own comms channels also received significant attention, with our Facebook posts about the exhibition being viewed more than 80,000 times, and more than 5,200 people reading the launch newsletter. The launch video, produced by Orchard, was watched more than 5,000 times across YouTube and Facebook, while the exhibition page on our website received over 1,000 hits.

Throughout the run the team worked hard on a programme of events including school visits, guided tours, and a lecture about *The Birds of America* with an expert guest speaker. This helped maintain the momentum of marketing and media coverage. Just after Christmas, news of **the discovery of one of Thomas Guille’s books** by a librarian in the Netherlands led to further media interest, including a Guernsey Press front page. This helped draw people into the exhibition in its final weeks.

In total more than **8,500 people** visited *Boundless Curiosity*. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Many commented that they had no idea the Library had such a fascinating history, and that the exhibition has ‘elevated’ the Library in their eyes. 76% of visitors surveyed awarded a score of 10/10, and the overall **Net Promoter Score** was 82 (where anything above 80 is considered ‘world class’).

*Boundless Curiosity* closed on Saturday 21 January 2023. We are now working to establish a plan for an exhibition **‘legacy.’** This has already started with the creation of a virtual tour, preserving the exhibition in virtual reality. We are also exploring ways to exhibit some of the items on display, particularly the rare books, on a more regular or even permanent basis.

And then, of course, we will have to start thinking about what to do for the 150th....

.....  
“A stunning, uplifting, immersive experience.”

“This is precious and amazing. History preserved to not only tell a story but inspire progress and continuation for generations to come.”



## 2. ADULT SERVICES

### GUERNSEY LITERARY FESTIVAL

The Guernsey Literary Festival made a triumphant return this year, hosting in-person author visits for the first time since 2019. More than 70 events took place in May and June, including a record total of 14 at the Library, all of which were very well attended. We began with a visit from popular crime writer **Elly Griffiths**, while the same day our Head of Marketing hosted an event with novelist **Anthony Horowitz** at the Princess Royal Centre for the Performing Arts. Further events followed with local writers **Jacquie Bloese**, Ben Hinshaw, and Jenny O'Brien; big-name children's authors **Hannah Gold** and Jodie Lancet-Grant; and visiting speakers on Philip Larkin and The Book of Ebenezer Le Page. The Schools Team also assisted the Festival committee in running the **educational programme**, while the Outreach Team organised a writing workshop with two authors in Guernsey Prison.

The Library continues to play an integral role in making the Guernsey Literary Festival a success. We look forward to continuing and strengthening this partnership next year.

### LIBRARIES OF SANCTUARY

In 2022 we joined libraries around the UK on the 'Libraries of Sanctuary' initiative, **designed to help refugees and other people seeking sanctuary** as they settle into a new community. This has been a particularly urgent consideration in light of events in Ukraine this year. As a community hub, public libraries are well placed to offer support, providing local information, signposting to necessary services, and helping to 'build a culture of welcome.'

This accords with work we are already doing in these areas, but the Libraries of Sanctuary scheme has given us access to further staff training and enabled us to follow best practice of UK libraries, making sure our library is a welcoming place for people seeking sanctuary.



### TEA & TALES

In 2022 the Outreach Team worked to expand our programme of Tea & Tales events. These sessions – which see librarians visiting care homes to read stories over cups of tea – can **help combat loneliness** and keep older people engaged in reading, and are hugely popular with residents. There are now seven monthly sessions taking place in a variety of care homes, reaching more than 100 older adults.

Throughout the run of *Boundless Curiosity*, the team delivered a special Tea & Tales series with an exhibition theme. Knowing that many residents would be interested in the exhibition but wouldn't be able to get to the Library, these events were an attempt to **bring Boundless Curiosity to them**. The team read a condensed version of the Guille and Allès story, talked about some of the items on display, and showed large-scale images including some of the plates from *The Birds of America*. Exhibition sponsors BDO provided volunteers to help facilitate. The events were extremely well-received.

### BEDTIME STORIES

Tea & Tales has become so popular that, in September, Summerland Nursing Home got in touch to ask if there was anything we could do to tide their residents over between sessions. This led to an idea for an **audiobook**. Knowing that many residents are particular fans of stories with a local flavour, we challenged the Library's **Writers Workshop** to write something new. The result was Bedtime Stories, a special CD containing four wonderful short stories written by local authors, and narrated by librarian Patrick Ogier.

The CDs have been delivered to Summerland, as well as several other care homes. With many residents reporting that they have trouble sleeping, and some that they aren't able to read much due to visual impairments, we hope this project will both enhance their wellbeing and help them stay engaged in reading between Tea & Tales sessions.

## DEATH POSITIVE LIBRARIES

To mark Dying Matters Week, in May we created a new page on our website showcasing **how the Library can support people confronting issues of death**, dying, and bereavement. The webpage includes a full list of all the books on these topics in the collection.

This year we also connected with the UK-wide 'Death Positive Libraries' scheme. This involved creating a special collection of books and other resources, as well as developing plans for events and activities to engage people in conversations around death, dying, bereavement, and planning for end of life.

## FREE PERIOD PRODUCTS

To help tackle **period poverty**, in May we teamed up with the Guernsey Welfare Service and the local Hey Girls scheme to provide free period products in our public bathrooms.

People who experience period poverty are unable to purchase the menstrual products they need, and, in many cases, this means they cannot participate in daily life. We hope this initiative can help to alleviate this situation.

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*"I love this place. I've come here once a week for forty years."*

## BOARD GAMES

In December we launched a new initiative to make **board games available for loan**.

There is growing evidence that board games can help combat loneliness, reduce stress, and boost mental health. As a result, loanable games are an increasingly common feature in libraries across the UK.

A selection of games is now available in the Clifton Room. Marketing took place in the run up to Christmas, generating considerable interest.



# 3. CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

## SUMMER READING CHALLENGE

The Summer Reading Challenge launched on Saturday 9 July. This year's theme of **'Gadgeteers'** was all about using imagination and creativity to solve problems. More than 1,500 children signed up, taking on the challenge to read six books over the summer holidays.

The Challenge is our biggest children's reading initiative of the year – it's a hugely important and proven means of encouraging young people to enjoy the benefits of reading for pleasure over the holidays, and can help to prevent the 'summer slide'.

A record number of **student volunteers** helped us with the Challenge, listening to children talk about the books they'd read and giving out stickers and rewards. We also enjoyed another successful partnership with the charity **Every Child Our Future**, who provided a volunteer at the Library as well as offering literary support at the Kindred Family Centre. This latter service proved effective in reaching children who wouldn't otherwise have taken part in the Challenge, with the ECOF volunteers reporting that they felt they'd made a real difference in the lives of several families.

## HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

As ever the Children's Library was extremely busy during school holidays in 2022. Special events this year included stories in Market Square for the **Guernsey Street Festival**; nature themed craft sessions; coding and Lego activities; a **Seedbomb workshop** in conjunction with La Société Guernesiaise; and a **codebreaking workshop** to support the Guernsey Literary Festival's WriteStuff competition.

Meanwhile, our recurring holiday activities continue to prove popular, including our **Chatterbooks** book group, **Baby Social**, and **Little Puffin Signing**.

## SUMMER STORIES

In May we welcomed schoolchildren to the Library for two weeks of Summer Stories in the Children's Library and Story Tower. The theme was **'Mythical Creatures'**, and a total of 831 children visited over two weeks.



## WORLD BOOK DAY

The annual celebration of books and reading took place on Thursday 3 March. To mark the day, we encouraged children to visit the Library dressed as **a character from their favourite book**, with the best dressed in with a chance of winning a book token. There was a great take up and three winners were announced. Staff also got into the spirit and dressed up for the day, with the Children's Team making the front page of the Guernsey Press.

## EXHIBITION CHILDREN'S TRAIL

The Children's Team worked hard to make *Boundless Curiosity* engaging and accessible for children and young people. The **family trail** led children and parents through the exhibition, posing them questions to answer along the way. Eye-catching parrot icons indicated clues. The trail finished in the Children's Library, where extra **Birds of America activities** were available, including a bird spotting activity and a bird bingo game.

The team also worked with Guernsey Museums to create the **'Little Victorian Library,'** an interactive role-play area like the Timewarp at Candie Museum. There was a miniature version of the Cotgreave Indicator for children to play with, while they could also dress up in Victorian costumes and pretend to be old-fashioned librarians.

## READING WELL FOR TEENS

The new Reading Well for Teens collection launched in October. This national scheme **supports the mental health and wellbeing** of teenagers by providing information, advice, and support to help them better understand their feelings, handle difficult experiences, and boost confidence in a post-pandemic context.

The Children & Young People's Collections Lead was part of a national team of library staff tasked with reviewing possible titles and curating the final list. Since the launch, the Schools Team have been busy promoting the scheme to secondary schools, with many purchasing the list for their own collections.



“Absolutely fabulous! Loved every minute, Aida is fantastic for people of all ages!”

“Amazingly read, my children have not stopped talking about the story hour!”

## DRAG QUEEN STORY HOUR

In September we welcomed Aida H Dee back to the Library for another Drag Queen Story Hour. This is the fifth time we’ve hosted DQSH since 2019, and as ever the event proved extremely popular, with tickets selling out quickly. More than 50 children aged 3-8 enjoyed an hour of interactive stories in the Hayward Room.

Our library was the last stop on a summer tour around the country. Some events in other libraries were interrupted by protestors, but happily we experienced nothing of that nature – the atmosphere was and **joyful and uplifting**, and feedback from children and parents was hugely positive.

## AUTHOR EVENT

In July, Guernsey-born children’s author **Kate Gilby Smith** joined us for a free event to celebrate the launch of her new book *Olive Jones and the Memory Thief*. She spoke about her journey to becoming an author, shared some writing tips, and discussed some mind-boggling theories of time travel. This was a great opportunity for local children to meet an author outside of our usual Book Week and Literary Festival offerings. The event was well-attended, and Kate proved to be a fun and engaging speaker – we hope to welcome her back again soon.

## LETTERS TO SANTA

Over Christmas the Children’s Library once again hosted a magic postbox, where children could post letters to Santa. The postbox was organised by Guernsey Post and the Young Business Group.





# 4. LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

## FAB LAB

2022 was the first full year in the life of the Fab Lab. We've seen significant growth in usage over the course of the year. In total there were **682 sessions**, including 132 first-time users. In July we launched a new series of **Saturday workshops**, offering taster sessions on all the Fab Lab machines. There were workshops on T-shirt design, cushion sublimation, scrunchie sewing, AI art prints, Christmas decorations, and more. The sessions all sold out, attracting new users and generating publicity that helped to raise the profile of the Fab Lab over the summer.

Also in July, the minimum age requirement to use the Fab Lab was lowered, allowing Year 7 students to use the facilities without parental supervision. Young people aged 12 and above still require an adult to accompany them for an initial induction, ensuring full parental permission is in place to then go on to use the Fab Lab independently. In addition, young people aged between 9 and 11 can now use the Fab Lab with parental supervision. These changes have already boosted usage.

Later in the year we launched a programme of **corporate and charity workshops**, with ten groups booking in including the U3A, Liberate, and BDO. We plan to expand this programme in 2023.

*"I just discovered the Fab Lab which is unbelievable. It's fantastic to have this available and offers up so many opportunities to develop."*



# 5. MARKETING & COMMS

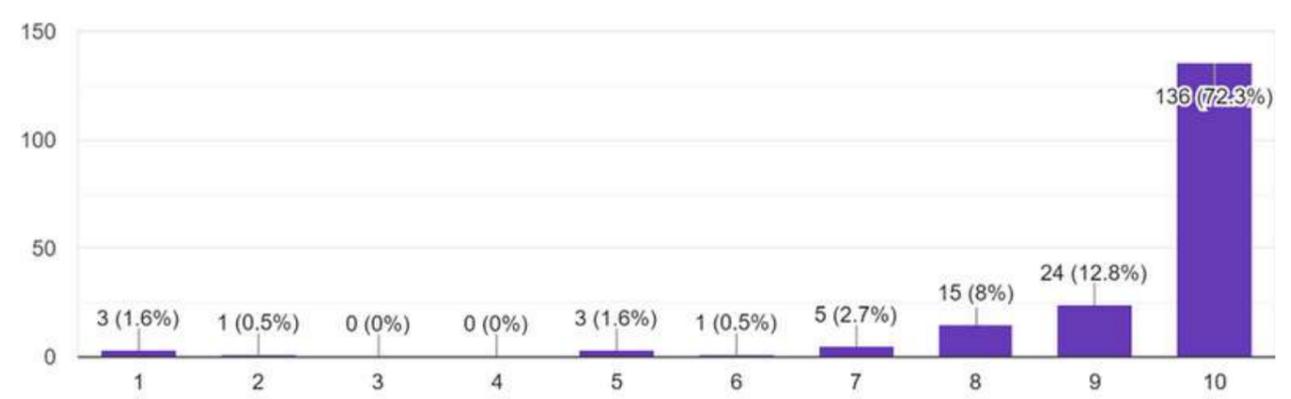
## CUSTOMER SURVEY

In January we ran a customer survey, seeking **user feedback on the library service**. The survey was posted on our social media and email newsletter. Questions included how often people visit the Library, how they stay up to date with what's happening, whether they've used the Fab Lab, and how they rate their experience. The overwhelming majority of comments were extremely positive. A selection of feedback is given opposite.

The final question on the survey asked, 'How likely are you to recommend the Library to friends or family?' This phrasing is used to determine an organisation's **'Net Promoter Score'** - the percentage of 'promoters' (giving a score of 9-10) minus the percentage of 'detractors' (1-6). A Net Promoter Score above 0 is considered good, above 20 favourable, above 50 excellent, and above 80 world class. The Library's score came in at 81.4.

10. Based on your experiences, how likely are you to recommend the Library to friends or family?

188 responses



## CHIEF LIBRARIAN COMMS

The announcement of Cornelia James as our new Chief Librarian received widespread media coverage. The press release was picked up by every media outlet, with an extended interview in the Guernsey Press that included reflections on how the Library is evolving, and discussion of the developing strategy. The nature of the story, and the coverage it generated, undoubtedly helped to raise our profile in the community.

*"We have been using the Guille-Allès Library for over 30 years and it has drastically changed and improved over that time. It's a lovely, welcoming place, and I should be absolutely lost without it."*

*"Unfailingly welcoming, clever, and helpful."*

*"I really like the way the Library has something to offer to everyone. It clearly makes an effort to be inclusive."*



# 6. SCHOOLS

## COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

In February the Head of Learning & Development contacted the Headteachers of all Primary schools to request that their fiction collections be reclassified into genres.

The aim of this **'genrefication'** is to make it easier for children to use their library, encouraging independent use and helping young readers make their own reading choices. Once complete, children can choose fiction books easily and independently based on their genre/type - 'animal stories', 'sports stories', 'mysteries', etc - rather than by author surname. With no full-time librarian present in the primary school libraries, ensuring users can find books they want independently will improve their library experience.

Nine primary schools agreed to genrefication, and over the summer the Schools Team worked hard to reclassify and relabel all the books in their libraries.

## SCHOOL EVENTS

March saw the return of **Book Week** for the first time since the pandemic. Children's authors Lisa Thompson, Gareth P Jones and Garry Parsons made the trip to the island for a series of sessions in schools, plus a special event at the Library. Covid restrictions meant the number of children attending these sessions was lower than previous years, but feedback from students and teachers was excellent, and the event at the Library was well attended.

In the Spring the Schools Team hosted in-school sessions for the **Carnegie/Kate Greenaway awards**. The sessions ran over four weeks, with a different book discussed from the shortlist each week. Students from all schools were then invited to an event at the Library in June to vote for their winner. 86 students attended this event, including 30 from secondary schools - the highest number in the event's history.

July saw the return of our Year 7 events, which see all the island's Year 7 students visit the Library. The events help them get acquainted with the service, as they find out how we can support both their schoolwork and their wellbeing (at a time when their engagement with the Library might otherwise start to dip). A total of 560 students visited this year, with many returning to the Library over the summer holidays. Feedback from teachers was extremely positive.



*"A massive thank you to you and your team for putting on an engaging and well-presented programme for our students. Many have come away from their trip wanting to revisit rooms they have seen for the first time today, whilst others have raved about the Fab Lab and the future opportunities that this service may present for them. Your time and effort is hugely appreciated, thank you for your hospitality."*





## 7. FUTURE

2023 is shaping up to be another busy year for the Library, as we look to build on the success of the exhibition and continue raising our profile. We have significant plans for the development of the Library building to ensure it can meet the evolving needs of the service. To achieve this we will be exploring ways of raising funding externally, primarily through sponsorship, just as we did for the Children's Library Project a few years ago.

Central to these plans for the building will be the establishment of an 'exhibition legacy', with some of the rare books in our collection on permanent display, and our history and heritage prioritised as a key part of the visitor experience for both locals and tourists.

Another key project in 2023 will be the rollout of the Solus library app, which will allow users to borrow and renew items with their phone rather than needing to have a physical library card. This should make it considerably easier for people to use the Library, as well as creating another significant opportunity for publicity.

All the signs point to another exciting year. Whatever it holds in store, we will keep working hard to ensure the Library continues to move with the times, and – in the words of Thomas Guille and Frederick Allès – always responds to the changing needs of the community.





**THANK  
YOU**

ANY QUESTIONS?  
EMAIL [GA@LIBRARY.GG](mailto:GA@LIBRARY.GG)

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