

Deeds live on when doers are no more

Passmore Edwards 200

The Passmore Edwards 200 Festival is a series of coordinated events to mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of John Passmore Edwards, the Victorian Cornish philanthropist, on 24 March 2023.

John Passmore Edwards was born in Cornwall and although receiving a basic education went on to become one of the most successful newspaper owners of his time. He was also a political and social reformer, and after a brief spell as the Liberal MP for Salisbury, decided to use his fortune to fund 70 public buildings; hospitals, libraries, schools, convalescent and holiday homes, art galleries and museums; as well as numerous other bequests. The majority of the Passmore Edwards buildings have survived and many are still serving the communities to which they were originally given.

Events will take place during 2023 throughout Cornwall, in London and across the south and south east of England, wherever a building funded by Passmore Edwards was built. The *Passmore Edwards 200* Festival has the potential to provide an exciting and wide-ranging programme of coordinated arts projects, exhibitions, learning programmes, walks and trails, media programmes and talks and debates to commemorate his life and lasting legacy. Participants will arrange for events in all of the areas where Edwards made his bequests, collaborating with others where possible, and together form a national Festival. The individual events will be specially created for the bicentenary or may be part of an organisations regular calendar of events, tailored to the bicentenary theme.

Why a festival

Asquith said that Edwards had done more than any single Englishman to help the people to equip and educate themselves for civic and social duty.

Edwards said that if he could fund the ladder, the poor would climb.



**John Passmore Edwards
1823-1911.**

Passmore Edwards was one of Cornwall's most famous people. He lived at a time of huge social and political reform and was involved in many of the issues that were being debated in the latter half of the 19th century. Many of these issues, such as education, the health service, slavery and social housing, remain as relevant today as they did then, and in celebrating his birth there is an opportunity to reevaluate some of those issues. Hundreds of thousands of people have benefited from connection with one of his buildings and thousands still do as the buildings, such as the Newlyn Art gallery or the London School of Economics, remain central to their community. The Passmore Edwards buildings are unique in that they were given to address a common need, an improvement in the poor living conditions that existed for the majority in the late 19th century. Whilst Samuel Smiles, through his book, *Self Help*, told people to help themselves, Edwards gave them the means. "If I can fund the Ladder" he said, "the people will climb". Libraries, Hospitals, Convalescent Homes and Children's Holiday Homes, Art Galleries, Museums, Schools for disabled children and orphanages, schools of arts and science, Settlements and Village Institutes, were the rungs of his ladder, together with gifts of thousands of books, pension funds and endowments, and funding for educational classes for both men and women. In Cornwall and London, the main areas where his bequests were focussed, Edwards is remembered, if at all, as the man who built Libraries. The Festival gives an opportunity to make the name Passmore Edwards as well known as it was in the 1890s, the period during which most of the buildings were funded.

In 2011 HRH the Duchess of Cornwall opened Passmore Edwards Court, a Sheltered Housing development making use of the the former Liskeard Cottage Hospital.



Reopening of the Hayle Institute after restoration. 2011



Members of Shallal Dance Theatre interpret the Life of Passmore Edwards in 2017.

Aims and objectives

The *Passmore Edwards 200* Festival will aim to bring people together in order to

- a). Celebrate the life and legacy of one of Cornwall's most famous people;
- b). Celebrate the continued work being undertaken in the buildings that he funded and by the organisations that he originally assisted;
- c). Develop and improve social cohesion in and between the communities to which the buildings were originally given and those who are the current custodians.
- d). Reappraise the issues that Edwards sought to address through his bequests, many of which are as important today as they were over 100 years ago;
- e). Create a lasting memorial of the bicentenary in Cornwall.

Edwards was a great political and social reformer and philanthropist, funding 70 public buildings, including libraries, hospitals, convalescent homes, art galleries, schools and museums. Were he alive today he would surely be campaigning on the issue of the climate crisis. All participants will be encouraged to adopt the principles of CDE.

**CULTURE
DECLARES**

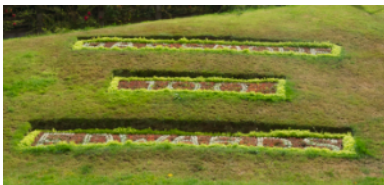


Benefits to the community

2011 saw the opening of a community garden at the Passmore Edwards Library in Truro, a garden at the Acton Care Home, in the grounds of the former Cottage Hospital and several floral displays



opening the Acton care Home garden



Roadside display in Hayle, Cornwall.



“Passmore Edwards” talks to school children at the Falmouth Library, 2011. Part of Cornwall Council’s contribution to mark the 100th anniversary of Edwards’ death.

The communities involved will benefit from a coordinated programme of art, drama and music, together with talks, media programmes and exhibitions about Passmore Edwards and the 70 public buildings he funded. There will be opportunities for communities to work together and through a cross the country “Big Birthday Party” raise funds to finance a lasting memorial to Passmore Edwards in Cornwall.

As well as celebrating the birth of Edwards the festival will celebrate the work that is being achieved by the present custodians of those buildings that remain in community use. These include the *South London Gallery*, the *Whitechapel Gallery* and the *Newlyn Art gallery*; former libraries now finding a new use as arts and performance centres, such as the *Courtyard* and the *Bush Theatres*, the *Bodmin Old Library* and the *Acton Art Centre*; and libraries that are meeting the wider needs of the community through shared community spaces, the Newton Abbott and Liskeard libraries There is a degree of commonality between many of these.



Through his weekly magazine, *The Building News*, edited by Maurice Adams, Edwards had access to all of the better known architects of the day.



The South London Art Gallery, designed by Maurice Adams.



The North Camberwell Library designed by Maurice Adams.



Mary Ward House (formerly the Passmore Edwards Settlement) designed by Dunbar Smith and Cecil Brewer.

Estimated income and expenditure

The festival will be non profit making but with the potential to fund a lasting memorial to the occasion. The Memorial fund will be from donations at events held during the festival and especially through the “Big Birthday Breakfast”. The central costs of the Festival will be raised through grants, sponsorship and donations. Any surplus remaining at the conclusion of the project will be dispersed to promote the cultural heritage of Cornwall.

Memorial Fund Target £30,000.

Festival central costs and selected event funding £25,000.

The budget will be developed over the planning period.

Only costs directly incurred by the Festival organisers will be included in the Business plan.

The Big Birthday Party

Marking the 200th Birthday of John Passmore Edwards



Whether you are at the Library in St Ives, live in a converted Convalescent Home in Surrey, or the Pegwell Hotel in Kent.

Bake, Beg, Borrow or Buy some cake and

Open your Door.

Say “HELLO” to friends, and strangers, customers & clients, patients, readers & “bleeders” (East Ham Hospital)

add some TEAS & COFFEES

Invite the Queen to add the Royal Icing to your Cake!

Invite the BIGWIGS and the little wigs

Tell them who you are, what you need, what you do and why you are here - and eat CAKE

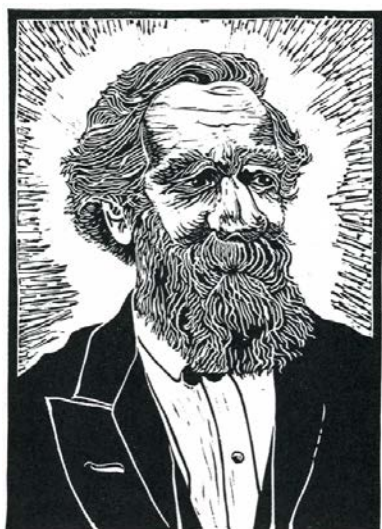
Tell them you are part of the Passmore Edwards Legacy, and have fun!

It's easy to Organise

In fact -It's a piece of CAKE!

24-March-2023

Linocut by Kim Vousden.
Commissioned as a
promotional image for
the John Passmore Edwards
Centennial Lecture given at
St Bride Library in London.
Hand printed limited
editions in red and black
were provided for guests on
the night. 135 x 190 mm



Marketing

Passmore Edwards is associated with over 70 public buildings in Cornwall, Newton Abbott, Bournemouth, the Home Counties, London and the South east. Whilst most people living in Cornwall will have heard of Passmore Edwards from the local buildings that bear his name they have little knowledge of his buildings in other parts of the Country. Likewise Londoners have knowledge of a local Passmore Edwards library or hospital but little knowledge of the 70 others. Through the Passmore Edwards story there are opportunities to promote interests in local history and genealogy.

Visitors to events held at the various buildings will include local residents and tourists. Whilst few would travel especially for the purpose of visiting Passmore Edwards buildings in a different locality they will include such events in trips organised for other purposes. For instance visitors from Cornwall may include events in London in a sightseeing or entertainment trip to the Capital.

Visitors will also include supporters of the various organisations that currently occupy the Passmore Edwards buildings, such as the Epilepsy Society.

Events should involve all age groups but specifically target young people.

Whilst some events will only take place during a single day, such as a fete at a former Convalescent Home or a talk or debate, others will take place over a number of days or weeks. Participatory events such as reading groups may attract returning visitors.

The time visitors spend at any event will depend upon the nature of that event but many will continue their new interest in the subject of the event attended.

Exhibition dedicated to extraordinary philanthropist

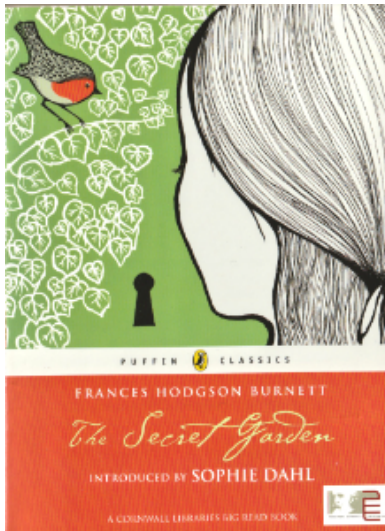
Centennial show is a must

W HILE it is not news that John Passmore Edwards, the philanthropist who built over 70 public buildings in Cornwall and elsewhere, is the subject of a new exhibition at the Newlyn Art Gallery, the fact that the exhibition is a must-see for anyone interested in the history of the county is a new revelation. The exhibition, which is the first to be dedicated to Edwards, is a celebration of his life and work, and is a must-see for anyone interested in the history of the county. The exhibition is a celebration of his life and work, and is a must-see for anyone interested in the history of the county. The exhibition is a celebration of his life and work, and is a must-see for anyone interested in the history of the county.



By Frank Rummund
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Exhibition at the Newlyn
Art Gallery in 2011.



Cover of a special edition of *The Secret Garden*, first published in 1911, given to all primary school children in Falmouth as part of Cornwall Libraries contribution to mark the centenary anniversary of Edwards' death, in 2011.

Open day at Age UK Day Centre, Falmouth; formally the Passmore Edwards Cottage Hospital. 2011



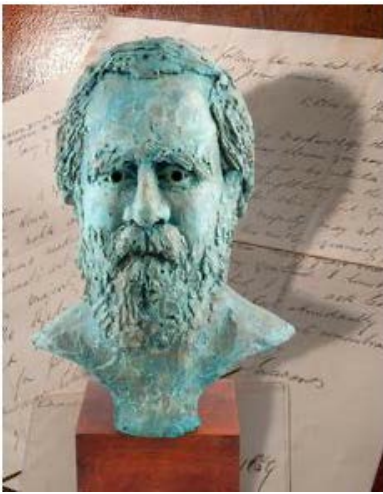
Background and history

The original idea for the Festival grew out of an individual interest and research into the life of Passmore Edwards. Research into his life and good works led to the creation of a free access website providing information on both Passmore Edwards and the individual buildings and organisation for which they were endowed. Feedback from this site showed the level of interest and knowledge of the Passmore Edwards Legacy. The contribution made by Passmore Edwards and the continued relevance of his principles and ideals suggested that his contribution to Victorian society and his lasting legacy was worthy of celebration and promotion. In 2011 a series of events was held to mark the 100 years since the death of Passmore Edwards on 19 April 1911. More than 80 events were held in Cornwall and in communities across the South of the country and in London. Most of the events were created by separate organisations that had a connection with one of the Passmore Edwards buildings and all were coordinated by Dean Evans who has researched Edwards life and work for many years. Since 2011 a Facebook Group, the Passmore Edwards Legacy, has provided a platform for groups connected with any of the Passmore Edwards buildings. The bicentenary is an opportunity to build on past successes.

The Organisers

The Passmore Edwards Bicentenary Association was formed to develop a programme of events to mark the bicentenary of the birth of John Passmore Edwards.

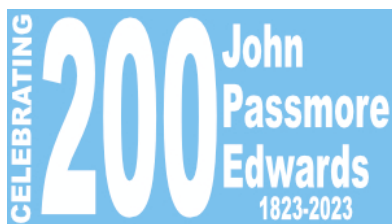
We are inviting organisations and individuals to create events to be included in the Bicentenary Festival programme, in 2023, so as to connect the communities that benefited from Passmore Edwards' philanthropy.



Bust of John Passmore Edwards (Ron Wood, 1991, St Agnes Museum, Cornwall), included in "A History of Cornwall in 100 objects", BBC, 2011.

Contact:

bicentenary@thepassmoreedwardslegacy.org.uk



We are

Dean Evans BEM, who has studied the life and work of Passmore Edwards for many years, coordinated the events that took place in 2011 to mark the centenary of Edwards' death; set up the Blackwater Village Trust to restore and return to community use the first of the Passmore Edwards buildings in Blackwater, Cornwall; and authored "Funding the Ladder, the Passmore Edwards Legacy.

Public Artist Chinks Grylls MAFA,UEL,Dip Arch Glass, who has had a life long interest in Passmore Edwards; having worked at the Whitechapel Gallery; studied for a MA at the University of East London, formally sited in his buildings, with her dissertation on one of JPE's lost libraries, bombed in the war; and completed projects in several of his buildings.

Jo Willis FRSA. Founder and creative director of Shallal an arts charity based in Cornwall. Jo has a passionate enthusiasm for access to the arts, equity in society and positive systems change for our times. A deep admiration for Passmore Edwards and all he gave and achieved for others. Shallal Dance Theatre created *Ladders and Footprints* in 2017 a performance and supporting exhibition celebrating themes within Passmore Edwards life.