

Celebrating Cornwall's Stained Glass Heritage



A community heritage project
led by Falmouth Art Gallery and
funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund

Before!



This innovative community project has transformed Falmouth's Municipal Buildings, home of Falmouth Art Gallery, Falmouth Town Council and Falmouth Library, into a sea of shimmering colours. The building has been sympathetically brought back to its former glory, with two magnificent new stained glass windows designed by Falcare (formerly Mencap) and excluded children, as well as a wall of fantastic new spot tiles all of which have been designed by local babies and toddlers (including babies of domestic abuse victims and teenage mothers).

Missing skirting board and dado rails have been copied by traditional craftsmen and replaced to restore the original symmetry of the building. Four major marine paintings, two by Charles Napier Hemy RA and two by William Ayerst Ingram, have been carefully conserved and re-hung in their original positions.

Throughout the project the local community has been involved, whether through making, volunteering, consultation or taking part in the exciting creative workshops, outreach activities, visits, special events and parties.

The project was inspired by Henri Matisse's chapel at Vence, which he designed at the end of his life when he was largely wheelchair bound. Because Matisse found it difficult to paint he produced innovative work 'drawing with scissors'.

The gallery thought it would be exciting to get disadvantaged groups to use the same collage technique to design stained glass windows to improve the Municipal Buildings, which were then owned by Carrick District Council. Staff were also keen to restore the original symmetry of the buildings by removing ugly formica cashier windows that were installed in the 1980s, and reinstate a contemporary version of the destroyed 18th century



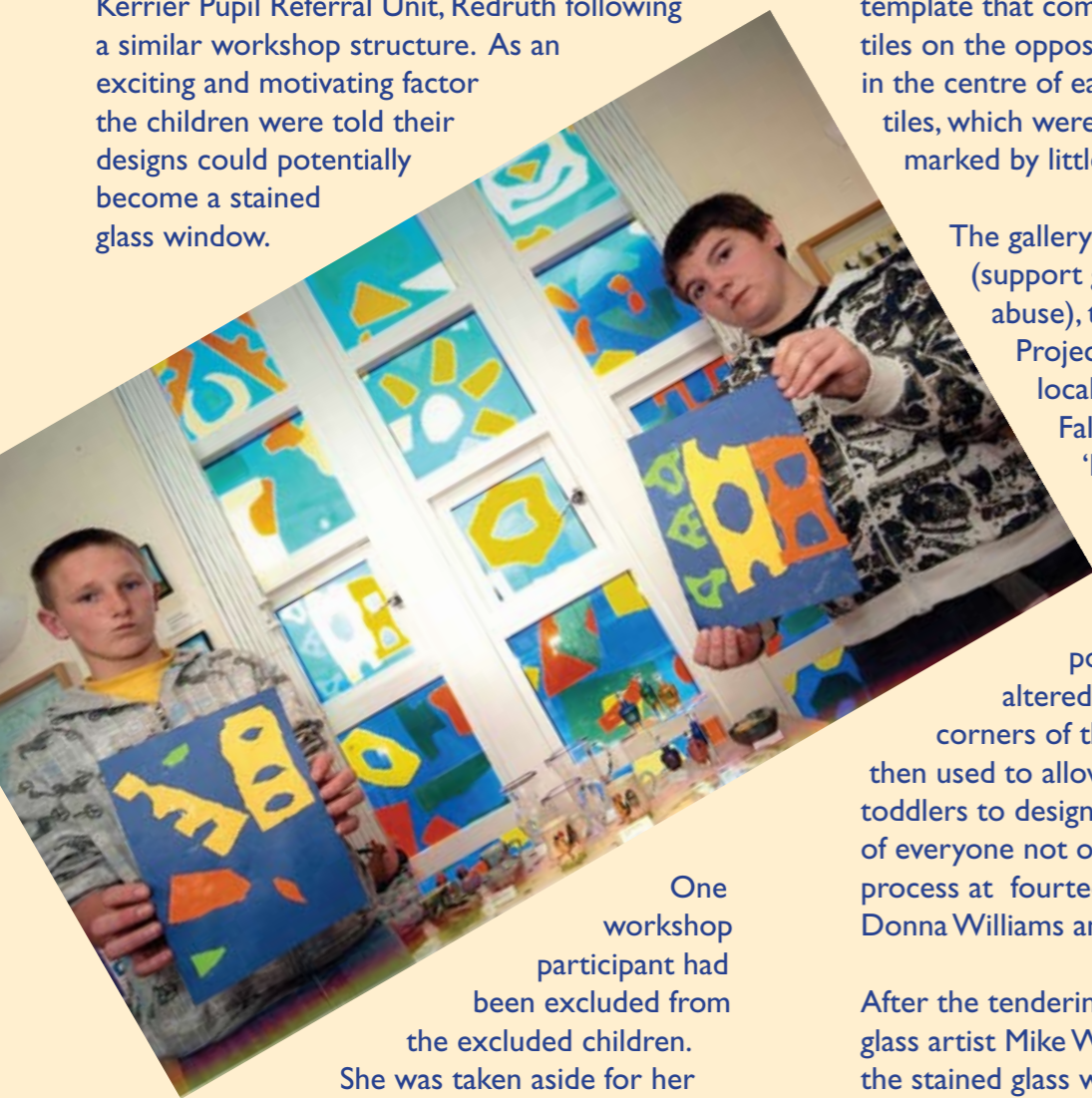
tiles and dado rails. Thanks to a £50,000 Heritage Lottery Fund grant with additional support from Falmouth Town Council and Carrick District Council, this vision became possible.

The first stage of the project was to create the designs for the two stained glass windows and the tiles. Specialist advice on the window specifications was given by stained glass artist Susan Kinley and historical stained glass expert Michael Swift, both based in Cornwall. For the tiles technical advice was given by Falmouth ceramic artist Linda Styles and Eddie Bradley of Fosters Pottery.

The glass for the huge windows in the foyer was designed by service users from Falcare (formerly Mencap). The group took part in Matisse workshops at Falmouth Art Gallery led by volunteer Claire Harrison. The group were not informed that they were designing glass in order to prevent them from feeling pressured by the weight of expectation upon them and to preserve spontaneity. The gallery also didn't want the group to be disappointed if the project failed to get planning permission.

The workshop was intended to be relaxed and fun, and this helped to retain a creative atmosphere. One of the participants, when finished, spookily drew a picture of a church with stained glass window, even though he didn't know what his abstract would be used for.

The designs for the second window in the gallery were created by children who had been excluded from local secondary schools. Brian Stewart and Donna Williams held an outreach workshop at the Kerrier Pupil Referral Unit, Redruth following a similar workshop structure. As an exciting and motivating factor the children were told their designs could potentially become a stained glass window.



One workshop participant had been excluded from the excluded children.

She was taken aside for her own 'solitary' session and worked enthusiastically. The workshops were a great success and even those that were usually referred to as 'disinterested' children were able to focus and create fantastic designs.

A selection of the designs from every participant created a visually exciting grid of colours and shapes that formed the window designs.

The finished designs for the listed building were then shown to Councillors, conservation officers, planners, interested members of the public and community groups, such as Age Concern, Falmouth Stroke Club and residential homes as part of the consultation process. At all stages the designs were received enthusiastically.

The spot tiles were created by local babies and toddlers aged from 2 weeks to 4 years old (pre-school). Ceramicist Linda Styles created a template that complemented the 18th century tiles on the opposite wall. She left a blank disc in the centre of each tile for the babies' spot tiles, which were cut from clay after they were marked by little feet, hands, fingers and tools.

The gallery invited the Susie Group (support group for victims of domestic abuse), the WILD Young Parents Project, mothers and babies from local health centres as well as Falmouth Art Gallery's regular 'Baby Paint' groups to take part in workshops where the babies and toddlers had fun imprinting marks in clay. The workshops were so popular that the template was altered to create extra spots on the corners of the tiles. These creations were then used to allow 120 Falmouth babies and toddlers to design their own tile. To the surprise of everyone not one baby cried during the making process at fourteen workshops, facilitated by Donna Williams and Glyn Winchester.

After the tendering process, Cornwall stained glass artist Mike Welch was appointed to make the stained glass windows at his workshop near Bodmin, using glass supplied by Newquay Glass who kindly reduced their prices. During the making of the windows Mike welcomed groups from Kerrier Pupil Referral Unit and Falcare to his workshop so they could see their designs being constructed. The groups also enjoyed visits to see stained glass at Truro Cathedral, the Royal Cornwall Museum and Tate St Ives.

Carpenter John Speakman, carefully removed the old formica tax office windows and restored the historic dado rail in the foyer, under the guidance of conservation officers Laura Fox and Kate McCavana, who supervised and approved the entire project.

The wider community has been involved throughout the project, through talks, tours, and workshops - creating their own designs. Participants included families, special needs groups, Age Concern, Falmouth Stroke Club, nursing homes, students, schools and community groups. The 'Skills for life' classes at Falmouth Marine School also created designs for their own stained glass window outside their classroom. Gallery staff installed their designs using brightly coloured window film. All of the project participants were invited to fun filled community launch parties to celebrate the completion of the project.



'Skills for Life' outreach window at the Falmouth Marine School



Dea Birkett from 'Kids in Museums' presided over the grand unveiling of the project, which was held on 5 November 2009 as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund's 15th anniversary celebrations.



Spot tiles designed by Falmouth Babies and Toddlers aged 2 weeks to 4 years



Amelia Jane Berry
James Edward Berry
Noah Bick
Henry Bird
Rory Bosence
Jack Bough
Florence Boyes-Hunter
Abby Brown
Mylo Harry Brown
Iceni George Brown
Erin Bryant
Ella Buffery-Martin
Charlotte Lucy Rose Camburn-Gerry
James Christie
Blossom Clark
Elizabeth Clark
Tabitha Clark
Harvey Coleman
Lilly Joan Coglan
Dion Cooke
Faith Coombes
Faith Coyne
Ruan Crooks
Zelah May Crooks
Ffion Currie
Eliza De Lashmutt
Chloe Devlin
Ginger Doyle
Julius Doyle
Callum Draper
Ewan Draper
Lauren Drouet
Wilamena Dyer
Freya Edney
Brandon Lee Elam
Jayden Elam
Bella Evans
Sampson Raven Fair
Scarlett Fergus
Dylan Fergus
Eliza Finney
Jake Finney
Alfie Fish
Lily Frost
Lily Gallagher
Madeline Gallagher

Hudson Gay
Iris Gillet-Brenchley
Mathilda Gillet-Brenchley
Maya Goodwin
Eleanor Greenslade-Bowden
Evie Greenslade
Gus Grooby
Dexter Harding
Lauren Heidstrom
Milo Herivel
Tizzie Blu Herivel
Derry Homer
Senen Homer
Tate Hopwood
Amy Horton
James Horton
Gracie Howard
Harvey Hutchins
Thomas Jago
Danielle Jane
Harry Jane
Leo Jaques
Kimberley Jenkin
Quentin Johnson
May Keeble
Demelza Kelly
Alistair Kennedy
Tom Kirkham
Lydia Kirkpatrick
Ellie Olive Kneebone
Jakob Larsen
Rosie Lawrence
Sam Lawrence
Zoe Leonard
Matias Lopez
Donald Mackay
Erin Petal Mackay
Dylan Maclean
Niamh Madden
Orla Madden
Angel Mallinson
Freddy Martin
Evie-Jean Mayle
Max McClarity
Finn McKean
Isaac Miller

Maddie Miller
Samuel Norris
Raffy O'Sullivan
Roxie O'Sullivan
Taylor Peacock
Jack Richards
Madog Rigby Hancock
Kairi Rowe
Isabel Darcy Rusden
Arturo Scott
Zeno Scott
Finn Seager
Ruben Seamark
Poppy Shuff
Isabella Sivam
William Sivam
Rudy Slydel
Sophia Thier
Charlie Thomas Smithers
Cara Stevens
Daisy Stevens
Lola Stevens
Ruby Stiles
Dylan Statham
Amber Symonds
Charlie Thomas-Parsons
Grace Topps
Benjamin Tasic
Daniel Tasic
Abigail Townsend
Teanna Townsend
Molly Trevelyan
Poppy Vyvyan
Wilf Vyvyan
Daniel Wallace
Freddie Thomas Walden
Lilly Warrel-Downs
Nia Ward
Charlie Watkins
Roseannah Watkinson
Asha Watt
Darcey White
Daniel Williams
Lewis Williams
Shenna Wilson
Ruby Woods
Amelie Emma Wright

Outer tiles designed by Linda Styles



'Falmouth Art Gallery works extremely hard to be a socially inclusive gallery and this project really proves their credentials. One mum said that on receiving the invite she sat and cried with pride. Thank you for making our pupils feel included. Projects like this change lives.'

Caroline Wilkins, Kerrier Pupil Referral Unit

FALMOUTH
Art
 GALLERY

For list of Cornwall's Stained Glass Heritage
 in churches and public places see:
www.falmouthartgallery.com

