

1. New funding secured for further National Curriculum Packs

1.1 Following the success of the Speaking and Listening Packs for Key stages 1 & 2, funded by SMLAC, DfES and DCMS, Falmouth Art Gallery has now secured funding from Bristol Museum & Art Gallery (South West Regional Hub) to produce another pack to aid teachers in delivering the National Curriculum. The sum secured for the project is £3,800. The gallery will use the same team that delivered the Speaking and Listening pack. This included the Local Education Authority and distinguished teachers Paula Ross, Deputy Head at Marlborough School, and Nina Cooper, recently retired from King Charles School. Nina is now a Gallery volunteer.

2. Grant Aid

2.1 Falmouth Art Gallery has won grant aid from the Arts Council England, South West for the purchase of high tech equipment to show moving and digital images. The equipment will be to the standard used by Tate Britain and the gallery will be working with the company *Black Box*, who specialize in museum technology. The grant is for £3,384, and the equipment will have the added value of being able to support the Falmouth Film Festival.

3. Sponsorship

3.1 David Lay of the Penzance Auction Gallery has generously agreed to sponsor an important drawing show. *Draws On – Sculptors v Painters* will be held at the gallery from 14 January to 25 February 2006. The works have been selected by the distinguished artists, Phil Booth (sculptor) and Chris Insoll (painter), and will include works by Henry Moore OM CH, John Ward CBE, Augustus John, and Graham Sutherland.

3.2 The country's leading dealer in British portraits, Historical Portraits Ltd, has agreed to sponsor a catalogue of Falmouth Art Gallery's portrait collection together with a major exhibition entitled *Posers*. Philip Mould OBE, of Historical Portraits Ltd, is well known for his television work, particularly the BBC's *Antiques Roadshow*. He is the art advisor to the House of Lords, has a reputation for making major discoveries and is author of the highly acclaimed book *Sleepers*. The term sleepers is used in the art trade term to describe unrecognised masterpieces. The *Posers* catalogue will be Volume 7, in a series cataloguing the Falmouth Art Gallery collection, copies of which are deposited in all the country's major art research reference libraries. The exhibition *Posers* will show at the gallery from 4 March to 6 May 2006 and will feature major works by the country's leading portrait painters from the 18th to 20th centuries.

3.3 Falmouth Art Gallery will be working in the autumn with teenagers from Falmouth School on a project funded by Little Parc Owles Trust. The children will meet distinguished artist Chris Insoll who will help the students to

understand the techniques used by St Ives artist Harry Ousey (1915-1985). It is hoped that the artist's niece, Sue Astles, will travel down from Derbyshire to Cornwall to meet and talk with the students. A display of Harry Ousey's work will be mounted in the permanent collection gallery during the time of the workshops.

3.4 The new catalogue *Master of Fantasy – the art of Patrick Woodroffe* has now been published, thanks to generous sponsorship from Hine Downing, Solicitors.

4. Falmouth Art Gallery Performance Review

4.1 With the significant sums of money invested by outside bodies, sponsors and donors it was felt that a professional and independent performance review should be carried out on the Town Council's Gallery.

4.2 This was commissioned in March of this year and was undertaken by *defacto*, who have built their reputation on working with multi-million pound projects. Evaluation is a key part of their work. They have worked in association with the Combined Universities of Cornwall, English Heritage, SWMLAC, Marina Developments Ltd, National Maritime Museum Cornwall, Royal West of England Academy, Penwith District Council, South West of England Regional Development Agency, Budock Vean Hotel, Mylor Yacht Harbour Ltd and Cornwall Regeneration amongst others.

4.3 The Performance Review is appended to this report. It will be posted on the gallery's website on www.falmouthartgallery.com, and be publically available in large print or tape versions.

5. Bid for National Treasure

5.1 The Town Council has presented a case to government advisors for a nationally acknowledged masterpiece to be housed in Cornwall at Falmouth Art Gallery as part of the permanent collection.

5.2 The work, entitled *Study of a Head*, was painted in 1933 by Ben Nicholson and is a tender love portrait of Barbara Hepworth and Nicholson at the beginning of their relationship. The style was influenced by Picasso, whom Nicholson visited in Paris that year.

5.3 The work has been recognised as of national importance by The Acceptance in Lieu Panel run by the MLA on behalf of the Secretary of State. The scheme allows for works of special art-historical importance to be accepted by the Government in lieu of Inheritance Tax duties.

5.4 Falmouth is making a special case for the work to be housed in the gallery. Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth are central figures in 20th century Cornish art. Ben Nicholson first stayed in the River Fal area of

Cornwall, from where he visited St Ives, with Christopher Wood. There they discovered Alfred Wallis.

5.4 The case has the backing of the community, Falmouth University College, CUC, major Cornish galleries and museums, the Lee Miller Archive and the Roland Penrose Estate. The curator is also grateful to Steven Ivall, editor of Packet newspapers, who wrote a personal letter in support of Falmouth's bid. Other national treasures accepted by the government in lieu of inheritance tax have been allocated to the National Portrait Gallery, the Tate Gallery, the Courtauld Institute, and the National Gallery. The Acceptance in lieu is administered by the MLA (Museums, Libraries and Archives Council). We expect to hear the results of the bid shortly.

6. Sea Britain Contribution

6.1 The *Passing Ships* exhibition, held as part of the Town Council's contribution to the Sea Britain festival was attended by 9,909 visitors with 837 education visits.

6.2 The gallery put on a number of family workshops to include groups such as Age Concern, University College Falmouth, MENCAP, Children's Art Day, Annex Arts, Falmouth Youth Club, excluded children and local schools. A number of certificate ceremonies for children also took place during the exhibition run, with the kind assistance of both the Mayor, Councillor Roger Bonney and Deputy Mayor, Councillor Alison Biggins.

6.3 The show was visited by Jane Dewey of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, who wrote in the visitors' book "*What a fantastically welcoming gallery*".

6.4 The gallery was also a major contributor to the NMMC Sea Britain exhibition, lending a number of rare engravings relating to Lord Nelson.

7. Falmouth Carnival

7.1 Falmouth Art Gallery worked in partnership with Falmouth Youth Club, Swamp Circus and leading Falmouth artists John Dyer and Jo Short to create an exciting float for the Falmouth Carnival. The theme was '*Falmouth Youth Club visits Falmouth Art Gallery*'.

7.2 The workshops were funded by Heritage Lottery Fund as part of the activities surrounding the purchase of what many experts regard as John Opie's finest painting *A Beggar boy*. The idea of the workshops was to help the community to value Cornwall's rich and distinctive artistic heritage.

7.3 The curator would like to thank and acknowledge the tremendous work contributed by Councillors Gerald Chin-Quee and Lesley Trenchard. The artwork produced included John Dyer-style seagulls, elaborate gilt frames (made from cardboard!), individual costumes and large scale masterpieces copied or interpreted from the Falmouth Art Gallery collection. Some

masterpieces from other galleries crept in, including the Mona Lisa by Leonardo and a landscape by Van Gogh.

7.4 Sadly, the Carnival was called off due to bad weather. To reduce the children's disappointment a fancy dress party was held the following week at the gallery. The 'masterpieces' and seagulls were hung from the rafters. Swamp circus kindly travelled from St Austell, where they were performing, to help entertain the children. The fancy dress competition was won jointly by all the children, who received as a prize a copy of *Samantha Seagull Visits Falmouth Art Gallery*, a recent publication funded by The Heritage Lottery Fund. Parents, staff and volunteers from the Gallery, and Youth Club workers came joint second in the fancy dress competition and were given biscuits and refreshments.

8. The Heritage Lottery Opie Project

8.1 The Heritage Lottery are listing Falmouth Art Gallery's '*Opie Project*' as an example of best practice on their website and have asked us to be a point of contact for organisations needing advice on mounting a community programme with Heritage Lottery Funding.

8.2 A list of the community workshops mounted as part of the '*Opie Project*' is appended to this report.

9. Art Gallery Staffing:

9.1 Claire Fuller has left the seconded position of Education Officer to the *Opie Project* and wishes to pursue a freelance career as an illustrator. The Town Council's staffing committee have been formally informed as well as the Heritage Lottery Fund, who have agreed that we may use the remaining funding to buy in casual labour as backfill in order to deliver the remaining commitments of the project.

9.2 The curator would like to acknowledge the outstanding contribution that Claire Fuller has made to the gallery. It is hoped that as funding allows we may employ her occasionally on a freelance basis to assist with special needs workshops. She has expressed an interest to do this.

9.3 The staffing for the gallery is now as follows:

Curator – Brian Stewart
Assistant Curator - Alex Hooper
Gallery Assistant - Natalie Rigby
Shop and Gallery Manager – Tamsin Bough/Pat Collinson (job share)

Saturday attendant – covered by casual labour

10. Loans to Registered/Accredited Museums

10.1 Falmouth Art Gallery has a 100 per cent record for meeting loan requests from other registered museums and galleries.

10.2 Since 2000 the gallery has administered 375 individual works from the collection and has administered their safe delivery and collection. These works act as 'Ambassadors' for Falmouth throughout the country.

10.3 The *Surrealists on Holiday* exhibition is now on loan to Whitstable Museum & Gallery from 15 September to 5 November 2005.

11. Conservation of the Collection

11.1 Falmouth is holding an exhibition of works conserved by the Town Council as an ongoing programme of care for the town's heritage. The works on display have all been recently conserved. These include examples by William Ayerst Ingram (a friend of Henry Scott Tuke), Sir Frank Brangwyn, a rare Rembrandt etching and an important engraving by Piranesi.

11.2 The conservation methods undertaken range from mounting in acid-free card or fitting with UV protected museum glass to full scale removal of discoloured varnish from oils. The treatment may be applied to works given to the Town Council many years ago or new donations that need minor treatment to help preserve them for future generations.

11.3 With constant monitoring by staff and qualified external conservators, the gallery continues to meet national 'best practice' standards in care of the collections. Much work is happening behind the scenes to conserve, catalogue and archive the collection, the whole of which will eventually be available for viewing on the worldwide website. This is made possible by an active volunteer programme.

11.4 Robert Child, Head of Conservation for the National Museums & Galleries of Wales, generously visited the gallery to give advice on the environmental conditions. The curator would like to formally thank him on behalf of the Town Council.

12. Period of Consolidation

12.1 With Town Council approval Falmouth Art Gallery has now begun the three year period of consolidation in which it does much work behind the scenes in the area of collection care, cataloguing and placing management systems that will make the gallery sustainable as a leading small gallery. During this period gallery staff will, of necessity, have to reduce its marketing activities which will cause a reduction on visitor numbers. However, the long-term benefits will be enormous.

12.2 Community activities, especially for those with special needs, will continue to be a priority of the gallery.

13. Signage

13.1 The Cornwall Tourist Board has undertaken as part of a Quality Cornwall Programme their assessment of the gallery. The gallery was highly praised but they have listed the need for much better external signage. The curator is taking this matter up with the Town Centre Manager.

13.2 At the suggestion of Councillor Geoffrey Evans the gallery had a flag made and hung from the building during the time when civic flags were not being used. This helped people find the building. Now the Cornish flag is also being hung. The curator and town council staff would like clarification on the protocol for flags. Perhaps this is a matter that should be discussed by full council and a recommendation made. It may be possible to get made an art gallery flag incorporating the Cornish flag, if this is thought desirable by Councillors.

14. Transfers and Disposals

14.1 In order to protect Falmouth Art Gallery's important collection the gallery wishes to follow the recommendations of best practice outlined by the Museums Association in the publication '*Collections for the Future*'.

14.2 The Art Gallery has consulted key museum partners and received advice from Alison Bevan, Director of Penlee House Museum & Art Gallery; Lucinda Middleton (Fine & Decorative Arts) and Emma Lloyd (Social History) from the Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro; Captain George Hogg and Jo Warburton from the National Maritime Museum Cornwall, and from SWMLAC.

14.3 The curator would like to show members of the Town Council's Art Gallery Committee, and any other interested Councillors, work for their consideration as transfers to more relevant registered/accredited museums. Transfers would only be carried out on the strict legal agreement that these works would be available for loan to Falmouth Art Gallery if required and that the works may not be disposed off without being first offered back to Falmouth Art Gallery. All transfers would be openly and publically listed on our website.

14.4 Duplicate prints, irrelevant material and other unaccessioned items for disposal would, as legally required, be offered through the *Museums Journal* to registered/accredited museums first in Cornwall and then elsewhere in the country before disposal is carried out according to national guidelines.

14.5 The Curator would like to show the items to the Art Gallery Committee and any other interested Councillors before making the list under their recommendation.

15. Training

15.1 Staff and volunteers have attended training at the NMMC organised by Penwith District Council with additional funding from SWMLAC on Environmental Monitoring and Care of the Collections; and a course on Museum Lighting. Natalie Rigby has attended a course on making grant applications organised by Creative Skills.

15.2 Volunteer Susanna Webster addressed a conference in Hampshire organised by GEM (Group for Education in Museums) on behalf of Falmouth Art Gallery. She told them of the educational activities organised for *The bit of a dive* exhibition and *The Surrealists on Holiday* exhibition.

15.3 The keynote speaker for the conference was the journalist Dea Birkett, who in her presentation listed Falmouth Art Gallery for their pioneering work with children and families. The gallery were one of only three museums highlighted as an example of best practice.

16. Cartoon workshop

16.1 Over 80 children attended a demonstration by Nick Brennan in the permanent gallery. Nick is a cartoonist with *The Beano* and *The Dandy*, and worked with the John Opie portrait, as part of the education programme funded by The Heritage Lottery Fund.