

## **1. Interpret Britain and Ireland Awards**

1.1 Falmouth Town Council has won two new major awards through its gallery for '*the outstanding way it informs and involves the public*'. The Interpret Britain & Ireland Commendations were presented to Falmouth Art Gallery by TV personality and heritage campaigner Loyd Grossman.

1.2 The Awards are made each year by the Association of Heritage Interpretation (AHI) to just a handful of museums, visitor attractions and projects in the UK and Ireland. This year's winners faced the toughest judging since the competition began 21 years ago. Loyd Grossman said: "*Britain leads the world in interpretation and that this year's winners had all reached a truly inspiring standard*". The gallery was commended for excellence in interpretation and a further special commendation for excellence in the use of the arts in interpretation. Both were for the *Samantha Seagull* project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

1.3 The Award scheme is run by AHI with support from English Heritage, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Countryside Council for Wales, the Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland) and the Office of Public Works (Ireland). The quality criteria are extremely stringent and each venue is visited anonymously by two judges. Out of all the thousands of museums, galleries, heritage sites and National Trust properties in Britain and Ireland only eight other venues have been acknowledged this year by the judges.

## **2. Part funding secured for Newlyn style masterpiece**

2.1 Grant funding of £21,250 has been secured from the MLA/V & A Museum Purchase Fund (£9,000), the National Art Collections Fund (£10,000 and local contributions (£2,250) towards the purchase of an early Newlyn School style masterpiece by the distinguished artist Sir Frank Brangwyn RA RWS PRBA (1867 – 1956). Brangwyn was the first living artist to be honoured with a retrospective exhibition at the Royal Academy.

2.2 The painting is considered of international importance being one of Sir Frank Brangwyn's rare Newlyn style works. Top quality Newlyn style works are avidly collected, not only in this country, but particularly abroad. The gallery has a particular interest in Sir Frank Brangwyn. His work *Funchal, Madeira*. 1891 presented to the gallery in 1923 by Alfred A. De Pass, is one of our most popular works. The painting we are trying to acquire is dated 1888, the year the artist is recorded working in Cornwall, a visit said to have been financed by Mr. Frederick Mills, head of Newman's, the Soho firm of artists' colourmen.

2.3 The style shows the strong influence of Stanhope Alexander Forbes (1857 – 1947) and the Newlyn School, a style Brangwyn quickly shook off for a more decorative approach more suited to fresco painting. The Newlyn School is of international importance and this work was painted at the start of

the movement. The Newlyn School had a common approach to painting, working out of doors in front of their subject. By 1905 the Newlyn School was described as the '*most significant body of painters now in England*'.

2.4 Brangwyn was a friend and admirer of Falmouth's first Royal Academician, Charles Napier Hemy. He made a special visit to Falmouth when Hemy was dying and said of his friend and mentor, '*His knowledge of the sea was superb*'. *As a draughtsman of wave forms he stands alone*'. Brangwyn's treatment of waves in the work we wish to purchase will make an interesting comparison with that of Hemy's treatment. Brangwyn also taught etching to Bernard Leach.

2.5 The price has been generously reduced from £38,000 to £34,000 for the gallery. The gallery is making applications to the Heritage Memorial Fund and The Heritage Lottery Fund for the shortfall. '*Fowey Harbour, Cornwall 1887*' by Brangwyn recently fetched £160,000 at Christie's in London.

### **3. Gifts**

3.1 A benefactor (who wishes to remain anonymous) from outside the county has donated *Coquelicots - Poppies, 1953*, a lithograph by Henri Matisse (1869-1954) in addition to a sum of money for workshops. This is especially welcome as the Matisse workshops have been much appreciated by families, community groups and schools. The curator feels that the donation may possibly unlock a major bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for special needs groups such as Falmouth Stroke Club, MENCAP, and Age Concern etc to design a stained glass window for the entrance to the Municipal Buildings. The curator would like permission from Councillors to make this bid to the HLF Community Fund in the next financial year after April.

3.2 The gallery has acquired through the official process of transfer & disposals from Bristol Museum & Art Gallery an original still from the film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* by Walt Disney. This cartoon film is acknowledged as a masterpiece in the history of cinema and so to have an original piece of rare artwork from the film is particularly exciting. The artwork will become part of the Children's Illustration Archive founded recently by the Falmouth Decorative Arts Society and University College Falmouth. The Society has also purchased for the gallery the original cover artwork by Robert Tyndall for Enid Blyton's *Noddy's Own Nursery Rhymes* as part of their five year funding of the archive.

3.3 The gallery has received four new works by Kenneth Newton (1933-1984) as part of the Richard Harris Gift. Particularly exciting is an early view of *Cubitt's Yacht Basin*, where the artist met his wife, Eleanor. The painting dates from the same period as *Railings at Guildford*, which has become a popular favourite with Councillors and visitors.

3.4 The artist Chris Insoll has donated a particularly sensitive portrait drawing of *Mr Horsley* made at Eschol Nursing Home in March 1985. A small oil study by the artist of Pednevaden Point, Porthcurnick was donated as part

of the Grace Gardner Gift in 2004. Chris is a leading figure in a group of accomplished artists based around Portscatho who are to be the subject of a new book to be published at the end of the year.

3.5 *1933 (Study for Head)* by Ben Nicholson has now been collected from the Tate Gallery, London where it was stored on behalf of the secretary of State. It has now been fitted with a protective case and has gone on display in the gallery. It was acknowledged as a work of national importance by a panel of experts and presented to the gallery by the MLA on behalf of the Secretary of State in Acceptance in Lieu of Inheritance Tax.

#### **4. Little Parc Owles**

4.1 The Little Parc Owles Trust has provided a further grant of £500 towards workshops to be held next autumn focusing on the new acquisition *1933 (Study for Head)* by Ben Nicholson. It is hoped that we will be working with artists Chris Insoll and Naomi Freers. Little Parc Owles have recently funded a series of workshops at the gallery focusing on the work of abstract artist Harry Ousey.

#### **5. New Digital Display Equipment**

5.1 The new hi tech equipment for showing contemporary digital moving images has now been installed in the permanent gallery. The equipment was funded by Arts Council England, South West in recognition of the gallery being a key venue for the arts in the South West. The equipment was launched with the showing of moving images by Tacita Dean, who has a one-person show at Tate St Ives until January 15; hybrid images by Susan Bofo, and a work by Graham Rich in tribute of the performance artist Bas Jan Ader, who was tragically lost at sea while sailing to Falmouth. The grant from the Arts Council England, South West was for £3,384.

#### **6. Sponsorship**

6.1 David Lay of the Penzance Auction Gallery has generously agreed to sponsor an important drawing exhibition. *Draws On – Sculptors v Painters* will be held at the gallery from January 14 to February 25 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. The sponsorship will also pay for the additional insurance premiums in borrowing works by Géricault and Rubens for this exhibition.

6.2 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 art 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 be shown at the gallery from March 4 to May 6 2006 and will feature major works by the country's leading portrait painters from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## **7. Training**

7.1 As part of the Heritage Lottery Fund position Natalie Rigby has worked closely with all staff to learn all aspects of collection management, museum management, education and interpretation. Her distance learning MA in Museums Studies is progressing well and she has been obtaining good marks in all her assignments. She has attended external training in paper conservation, strategic commissioning, national curriculum, photoshop, evaluation, inspiring creativity in the early years, marketing, media training, climate control in museums, light levels, fundraising, identification of materials, basic cleaning, and display screen equipment.

7.2 One of our career-based volunteers, Verity Sidgwick, has gained a distinction for her masters degree in Museum Studies. She has since gained a full-time post as Volunteer Co-ordinator at the Elliot Colliery Winding Museum in New Tredegar, South Wales.

## **8. Data**

8.1 The Matisse exhibition has proved a great success receiving 7,895 visitors with 649 educational visits including special needs and excluded children. The workshops were fully booked. The *Western Morning News* attended one of our workshops and produced a very complimentary double page spread on December 13 2005.

8.2 Visitor figures for 2005 were 43,731.

## **9. Celebrity Visit**

9.1 Flog It presenter Paul Martin from BBC Bristol visited the art gallery on Christmas eve and was very complimentary. He wrote in the visitors' book that the gallery had given him inspiration for the future. He was particularly taken by John William Waterhouse's painting *The Lady of Shalott*.

## **10. Brunel 200**

10.1 Falmouth Art Gallery has successfully bid for **£10,250** to mount a celebratory heritage exhibition to mark the 200th anniversary of Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806-1859). Part of the project will involve the commissioning of local craftsmen and women to interpret Brunel's achievements in a fun and accessible way. We will also be working with Swamp Circus, and artist John Dyer, who has produced a number of

celebratory paintings including for the Falmouth Tall Ships Festival, Ellen MacArthur's triumphant return to Falmouth and for TV presenter, Alan Titchmarsh. Rare prints from the collection that have recently been conserved by the Town Council will go on show for the first time alongside loans from the Royal Cornwall Museum, and the Museum of Submarine Telegraphy, Porthcurno.