

1. Heritage Heroes Awards

1.1 Falmouth Town Council's art gallery won the *Heritage Heroes Award* for the best project in the category of Museums and Archives against strong competition at the Heritage Lottery Fund's award ceremony held in Bristol on March 24.

1.2 The Heritage Lottery has funded over 1,566 projects with nearly £323.5 million of funding, including multi-million pound projects, so to win this award is a great honour. The gallery won the award for the saving and preserving of John Opie's Cornish masterpiece and for the year long community programme using the painting as a catalyst for a wide range of activities and workshops.

1.3 Recognition from The Heritage Lottery Fund that the gallery has managed the funding to the highest standards and delivered on time and on budget a key project of great benefit to the community will hopefully be noted by other potential funding bodies. The gallery has now won or been short-listed for 13 major national awards in the last four years.

1.4 The curator would like to thank all Councillors for their contribution, but in particular Councillors Alison Biggins, Roger Bonney, Gerald Chin Quee, Maureen Davies, Geoffrey Evans and Lesley Trenchard. Throughout the project Councillors, Town Council staff, gallery staff, and volunteers have contributed far above the call of duty on a range tasks from presenting children with certificates to the presentation of accounts and evaluations.

2. Volunteers Party

2.1 To celebrate the gallery's nomination for the Heritage Heroes Awards a special party was held in the gallery prior to the ceremony to thank the volunteers for all their hard work. This was held in partnership with Trebah Garden staff and volunteers, who were also nominated for an award by the Heritage Lottery Fund for their highly acclaimed D Day Memories oral history project.

2.2 A highlight of the afternoon was a well attended gallery talk by Viv Hendra on John Opie. For the first time in the South West the gallery has hung together child portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds PRA (Opie's mentor) and by John Opie RA. These provided the focus for Viv's entertaining talk. The talk was the first in a six month programme of events to mark the 125th anniversary of the MLA/ V & A Purchase Grant Fund. The Fund assisted with the purchase of the Opie painting.

2.3 A talk and gallery visit is being organised in June for the National Art Collections Fund by Barbara Spring, the Regional Representative. The NACF are also a lead funder for the purchase of works of art for museums and galleries.

3. Joint Bid for Newlyn style masterpieces

3.1 Falmouth Art Gallery and Penlee House Gallery & Museum have combined forces in a bid worth **£111,660** to Cornwall. Together the galleries have already raised **£67,710** (61 per cent) with key grants coming from the NACF & MLA/V&A National Purchase Fund. The galleries have bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the shortfall of £43,950 (39 per cent).

3.2 The project falls into two phases:

Phase 1. The saving of two Newlyn School masterpieces of national importance: *Return of the Fleet, 1888* by Sir Frank Brangwyn RA RWS PRBA 1867-1956 (for Falmouth Art Gallery Collection) and *In the Whiting Ground* by Harold Harvey 1874-1941 (for Penlee House collection). The works are central both to the story of Cornwall's rich artistic heritage, and to coastal life in Cornwall during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Phase 2. The use of the two paintings as a catalyst for an exciting community learning programme in Falmouth and Penzance, delivered jointly by staff and volunteers of Falmouth Art Gallery and Penlee House Gallery & Museum. The project helps both local communities learn more about the rich artistic heritage of Cornwall, which is famous throughout the world. A key component of the project would be the training and sharing of transferable skills and the strengthening of partnerships, not only between the two museums, but with a wide range of partners from youth clubs to Age Concern, with a special emphasis for disadvantage groups.

3.3 The bid has the support of the local press, the NACF, the V & A/MLA Purchase Grant Fund, and a large number of project partners from Youth Clubs to Age Concern.

3.4 We are particularly excited as we understand that this is the **first combined bid of this type in the country** and a number of organisations and press contacts are interested in how the partnership would deliver this project.

3.5 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*'.

4. Gifts

4.1 The illustrator Keith Watson has generously donated a watercolour illustration of Brunel's ship '*Great Britain*' made of musical instruments, which he has drawn especially for the *Brunel 200* exhibition. After the exhibition the watercolour will become part of the children's illustration archive. Keith Watson presented in 2004 *Cats on rooftops, St Ives, 1949*. It has proved to be very popular with visitors and is now available as a postcard.

5. Commissions

5.1 Heritage Lottery funding has enabled the gallery to commission a work by the distinguished Falmouth artist, John Dyer, to mark the *Brunel 200* celebrations. Entitled *Gateway to Cornwall – the Brunel 200 celebrations* it features Brunel's bridge at Plymouth and a portrait of the artist with his wife, Jo Short (also an accomplished artist), and their daughter Marthalily enjoying the firework display. The work will become part of the permanent collection and was funded by Brunel 200 – an initiative of Bristol Cultural Development Partnership – Arts Council England South West, Bristol City Council and Business West.

5.2 John Dyer's work is extremely popular and his painting marking the arrival of Ellen McArthur in Falmouth sold for a four figure sum within minutes of being displayed. He has regularly been artist in residence for the Eden Project, Tresco and St Michael's Mount and has received commissions from the National Trust, Alan Titchmarsh and a number of celebrities.

5.3 A book on the artist is planned for publication by Truran books later in the year, and this painting will be featured.

6. *Draws On* exhibition

6.1 This exhibition, which was sponsored by David Lay, The Penzance Auction House, was very successful and was attended by **5,980** visitors with **646** educational visits.

6.2 The gallery put on a number of family workshops to include groups such as Falmouth Stroke Club, MENCAP, Children's Art Day, Cluster Schools, Falmouth Youth Club, excluded children and local schools.

6.3 The Mayor presented a large number of certificates to the children during a number of ceremonies. He very generously funded from his own pocket a large tin of sweets for the teachers to distribute to the children.

6.4 The curator would like to thank the artists Phil Booth and Chris Insoll for their valuable contribution to this exhibition.

7. *Posers* Exhibition

7.1 The opening of this exhibition was one of our busiest. Many of the visitors dressed in fancy dress as 'posers'. Brett Jackson of Swamp Circus stood on stilts covered by a canvas Doric column. His white powered head and shoulders protruded at the top to make the most fantastic live sculpture. He kept extremely still, and occasionally changed his pose to the surprise and delight of the children.

7.2 Philip Mould OBE, art advisor to the House of Lords and a painting expert on the BBC's Antiques Roadshow opened the show.

7.3 The insurance figure for the value of the paintings sets a new record for the gallery and has been generously funded by Historical Portraits Ltd.

7.4 A catalogue of the portraits in the collection of Falmouth Art Gallery has been published to correspond with the exhibition. This too was funded by Historical Portraits Ltd. It is the seventh volume in a series of catalogues of works in the collection. These will be bound as a collection and lodged in key art reference libraries in London and Cornwall to aid research.

8. Posers Workshops

8.1 The popular Falmouth band **Three Daft Monkeys** worked with the children and performed their latest music. Lyrics were created by the children using the paintings as inspiration, which were then set to music. The gallery also undertook a number of mime workshops with Brett Jackson from Swamp Circus and a 'Punk Posers' drawing workshop. These were funded by The Children's Fund.

8.2 The gallery has also been working with Education Out of Schools, for children who have been excluded. We are currently working on a creative literacy project in which they write the lyrics for songs, which will be recorded by Three Daft Monkeys to CD. The children will all get their own copy with a cover designed in the gallery by themselves.

8.3 We have also collaborated with Penny McBeth and the Carland Cluster. The project used the gallery's exhibitions to inspire gifted and talented children in creative literacy as part of a project funded by the DfES.

8.4 In recent months the gallery has attracted over six new Cornish schools for educational workshops.

8.5 On Saturday March 18 Mark Norris, Education Officer at Newquay Zoo held a 'Creepy Crawleys' workshop at the gallery. The children dressed up and 'posed' as explorers. They were given the opportunity to dress up in camouflaged clothing and then Mark showed them how insects used camouflage to protect them. Live examples were passed around from glass tanks. The event, held in partnership with Newquay Zoo and Falmouth Youth Club, marked both Science Week and events held for Fair Trade Day. The event was packed out with over 200 people attending throughout the afternoon. The children also enjoyed drawing the insects.

9. Arts Council England, South West

9.1 The LED screen funded by Arts Council England, South West has proved to be a considerable asset to the gallery. The gallery has been able to show moving images by leading artists such as Tacita Dean, Graham Rich, Susan Bofo and Angela Praed. The gallery will also be showing in the near future the work of Will Jackson, a Falmouth based artist who has done much work for the Eden Project.