

1. The John Singer Sargent Project

1.1 Falmouth Art Gallery is close to securing a half a million pound project to help promote Falmouth's rich artistic heritage after it was announced that it had been successfully awarded a grant of £253,500 by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

1.2 Staff have been working hard for a year towards raising the funding for the ambitious John Singer Sargent Project. This project involves the acquisition of a masterpiece of world importance, an exciting two year exhibition and community education programme, as well as the creation of a temporary post in Falmouth of a Project Officer.

1.3 The masterpiece the gallery wishes to acquire is the oil painting, ***Portrait of Charles Napier Hemy RA RWS 1841–1917 by John Singer Sargent RA RWS 1856-1925***, which has been offered to the gallery for £285,000, considerably below the market value.

1.4 The gallery identified the painting as a seminal work that is of great significance in Falmouth's rich artistic heritage, and a top priority for the town's collection. Five years ago staff traced and contacted the owner in Canada. He has now agreed to sell the painting for this very special reduced price to Falmouth Art Gallery.

1.5 Both artist and sitter are of great significance to Falmouth, the South West and internationally. Painted in Falmouth, the work is of international importance and has remained the property of the Hemy family, having never been placed on the open market before. Nor has it ever been publicly exhibited since its original showing at the New Gallery, although it is recorded in *John Singer Sargent – The Later Portraits* by Richard Ormond and Elaine Kilmurray (published for the Paul Mellon Centre for British Art by Yale University Press, 2003).

1.6 At the time of this portrait John Singer Sargent was acclaimed as the greatest portrait painter working in England since Lawrence, and was the most successful international society portraitist, regularly visiting the United States to fulfil commissions. Charles Napier Hemy was the leading maritime painter of his generation. He was appointed Official Painter to the Royal Yacht Squadron and was a prolific exhibitor at the Royal Academy. He settled in Falmouth in 1881, and produced the majority of his finest works here. He was Falmouth's first Royal Academician.

1.7 The John Singer Sargent portrait of Charles Napier Hemy is the best of four emotionally charged portraits of Sargent's artist friends produced in 1905. In January of that year his friend and neighbour, the painter Robert Brough was fatally injured in a railway disaster at Cudworth in Yorkshire. Sargent

rushed to his bedside in a Sheffield hospital and subsequently wrote the introduction to a memorial exhibition of his friend's work. He was deeply moved by the loss of his friend and this prompted the four emotionally charged portraits of artist friends, each inscribed across the top 'to my friend...'. The portraits are very different from the bravura style of Sargent's society portraits and are painted with an honest simplicity and compassionate warmth that places them firmly among his greatest masterpieces.

1.8 Commented Richard Ormond, the world's leading expert on Sargent:

'I fully support your application for the portrait of Charles Napier Hemy by Sargent. The portrait is a fine example of Sargent's mature portraiture and it represents a major marine artist of great significance to Cornwall. Sargent commands high prices in America, so the price the gallery has managed to negotiate is good value.

The portrait has a force and directness that one often finds in Sargent's pictures of his fellow artists. There is a sense of creative energy and force of character in the way that Hemy's powerfully modelled head emerges from the shadows. He gazes straight out at us with a fierce and penetrating stare, silver hair swept back, bushy eyebrows and full moustache standing out from the warm flesh tones. Two accents of white, the shirt collar and the edge of a handkerchief, are the only highlights to relieve the dark costume, which is toned back so as not to distract attention from the head. This is a strong piece of painting and a memorable characterization.

Sargent painted a portrait of the artist Seymour Lucas in the same year as the Hemy (1905). He clearly admired these fellow Royal Academicians, though both men belonged to an earlier era, and practised a form of art very different from his own. The portraits were a tribute to their achievement and reflected the warm personal relations that Sargent enjoyed with them. Napier Hemy is a wonderful marine painter whose work deserves far wider recognition than it has received in recent years.'

1.9 Philip Mould OBE, Art advisor to the House of Lords and Antiques Roadshow expert, considers Sargent's artist friends' portraits a highly significant and fascinating series. He says that with this portrait Sargent is working in a tradition commenced by Van Dyck and continued by Gainsborough, Lawrence and the Pre-Raphaelites, in which the society portrait artist applies his polished technique to express something altogether more intimate and convivial. He considers the portrait to be of world importance.

1.9 According to Hemy family archives John Singer Sargent stayed at Hemy's Falmouth home, Churchfield, for three days. Hemy recalled: *'He made no attempt at drawing, he threw a mass of colour for the forehead, then worked round it and said things in many languages under his breath and seemed thoroughly dissatisfied with everything. On the third day I told him to throw his cigarette away and settle to. He did so for half an hour, working hard, fuming all the time. Then I heard him whistling softly to himself, and*

watched him swaying his head from side to side while he scrutinised his work. He lit another cigarette, painted the clothes in, put the highlights in the hair, threw in a finishing touch or two, and the thing was done!

Hemy's granddaughter, Margaret Powell, wrote: *'Hemy was impressed. He had seen the portrait come to life in an hour's work. It was the work of a genius, uncompromising, an artist's portrait of an artist. Hemy is seen full-face, austere, in black clothes, the only relief the twinkle in his eyes. When Hemy mentioned the bill for his portrait, Sargent asked only for one of Hemy's paintings, so Hemy put several pictures around the studio and Sargent, to his surprise, chose a modest interior scene. Hemy at once protested, pointing out that he had chosen the picture of least value. "Well," said Sargent, "you have a wife and ten children, while I'm not even married".'*

1.10 Despite the recession the gallery has also already received pledges of conditional support mounting to a six figure sum from **The Art Fund, the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund** and from **local supporters**. The gallery is still collecting donations towards to purchase of the painting, however small.

2. Falmouth Art Gallery Exhibitions

2.1 As part of the John Singer Sargent Project the gallery is mounting an exciting programme of exhibitions to help celebrate Falmouth's rich artistic heritage and place it in an international context. The 2010 programme is as follows:

27 February – 17 April 2010: 'Connections'

This exhibition celebrates the strong connection between the rich artistic heritage of Falmouth and the formation of Falmouth Art School (now University College Falmouth). The exhibition includes major artists such as: Ray Atkins, Trevor Bell, Sandra Blow, Susan Boaf, Laurie Burt, Prunella Clough, Tom Cross, Tacita Dean, Tom Early, Michael Finn, Sir Terry Frost, Francis Hewlett, Kurt Jackson, Robert Jones, Richard Long, Danny Markey, Lee Miller, Anthony Penrose and Sir Roland Penrose

24 April – 26 June 2010: 'A mixed bunch'

The Fal area boasts some of the finest gardens in the country. To celebrate the coming of spring, this exhibition will feature floral art from Falmouth collections. On show will be *Carnations* by Henry Scott Tuke RA, recently presented to the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society by George Bednar.

Featured in the exhibition will be works by: Michael Strang, Grace Gardner, Isobel Heath, Penny Macbeth, Henri Matisse, Kenneth Newton, J. T. Richardson, John Ward, J. W. Waterhouse and Marjorie Williams.

**3 July – 4 September 2010:
'RA RA'**

This summer exhibition displays work from Cornish collections by leading Royal Academicians past and present.

Some of the Royal Academicians to 'be hung on the line' will be: John Opie, John William Waterhouse, Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, Sir John Arnesby Brown, Sir Frank Brangwyn, George Frederick Watts, Henry Scott Tuke, Eileen Cooper, Gary Hume, Ian McKeever and John Hoyland. It will also feature work produced by children who may become the Royal Academicians of the future.

The Permanent Collection display at this time will be selected by an 'RA style selection panel' comprising local special needs groups.

**31 July – 20 August 2010 - Permanent Gallery:
'Full Sail'**

This exhibition is being mounted, in partnership with TMS Financial Solutions, to coincide with the magnificent Pendennis Cup to be held in Falmouth between 9 to 14 August 2010.

The exhibition features important work by Alexander Creswell, Phillippe Gavin, Charles Napier Hemy, Jamie Medlin and Henry Scott Tuke.

**11 September – 6 November:
'The edge'**

Inspired by Harry Ousey's remarkable series of paintings called 'Edge movement', this quirky exhibition shows 'the edge' explored by artists. Whether it is where the sea meets the shore, woodland meets fields, light meets the sharp blade of a knife, colour touches shape or where areas are defined by railings or fences.

Among the artists featured will be Adam Lowe, Patrick Caulfield, Grace Gardner, Charles Napier Hemy RA, Kurt Jackson, Ian McKeever RA, John Miller, Kenneth Newton, Breon O'Casey and Robert Jones

**13 November 2010 – February 2011:
'A decade of collecting'**

This exhibition features oil paintings, watercolours, master prints, sculpture and automata – all of which have entered the collection since the start of the new millennium.

Included are local gifts and bequests, as well as grant funded works that have been saved for the nation by the generosity of organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, The Art Fund and the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund.

The show will include works by Francis Bacon, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Edvard Munch, Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, as well as favourites from the Children's Illustration Archive, including Dan Dare, Pugwash, Bagpuss and Thomas the Tank Engine.

3. Darwin 200 Celebrations

3.1 This project has now been completed and has exceeded all expectations. The following has been achieved:

Exhibition visitor figures:	44,159
Falmouth Art Gallery community and education visits:	4,721
Added value in volunteer hours: (according to HLF formula)	£55,181
Total Media Reach:	12,098,000
Total visitor figures for Darwin 200 Project:	208,041

3.2 The gallery's research team headed by Michael and Linda Bickford were able to locate the spot from which Darwin left Falmouth, after *The Beagle* moored in the Fal following its epic and historic five year journey. Darwin left from The Royal Hotel at Fish Strand on the Royal Mail coach. This site is now the premises of HSBC bank. With the kind support of the HSBC bank manager Steve Martin the gallery has erected a Cornish granite plaque to mark the occasion. It was designed and fitted by local craftsman Robert Lawrence, monumental mason.

3.3 Marine artist Michael Bickford has generously donated to The Mayor of Falmouth, Councillor Geoffrey Evans, his excellent painting *Home waters - His Majesty's survey ship Beagle anchored in Falmouth Harbour, dawn 3 October 1836*. The scene was carefully researched and is believed to be the only painting of *The Beagle* moored at Falmouth. The work has entered the permanent collection of Falmouth Art Gallery.

4. Celebrating Cornwall's Stained Glass Heritage

4.1 The end of this three year project was marked with a huge community launch party hosted by the Mayor. It took place on Friday 5 November, the 15th anniversary of the Heritage Lottery Fund and provided an opportunity to thank them for all that they've done for Falmouth. A delegation from the Heritage Lottery Fund's office in Exeter travelled down for the event.

4.2 Over 250 people gathered from across the country to hear the opening speeches from Hilary Bracegirdle, a Trustee of the Heritage Lottery Fund and

Dea Birkett, Director of Kids in Museums. Party-poppers, balloons and cheers of support heralded the grand unveiling.

4.3 Special needs groups from Falcare, Falmouth Marine School and Cornwall College were presented by the Mayor, Councillor Geoffrey Evans, with special certificates and prizes as a thank you for all of their hard work. The groups, local families and other guests enjoyed making stained glass greeting cards and HLF birthday badges. They also enjoyed sandwiches, cakes and performances from the talented Radio 4 poet and singer Sally Crabtree. Amazing face painting was provided by Sarah J. Brown. Both children and adults were decorated with a wide range of designs. Museum consultant Jo Graham commented: *'I had a lovely butterfly painted on my hand and Sarah is the best face painter I have ever seen.'*

4.4 One of the highlights of the day was a musical performance by Esteban Antonio, who has performed with George Michael and written film music for Johnny Depp. He has been described by *The Observer* as *'one of the greatest guitarists of our century'*, and was awarded a scholarship to the Royal College of Music at the age of 9. He played to visitors the Ha-Shem, a new musical instrument he designed himself, before he premiered it in Hong Kong. It was made in Cornwall by Stephen Hill and is a 17 string double necked guitar with harp section. Esteban played his own composition written about the Cornish sea in front of sea paintings by Kurt Jackson, Sir Frank Brangwyn and Charles Napier Hemy.

4.5 The day's activities were documented by children from 'KC Talk' (the TV station of King Charles Primary School) and by Radio Cornwall for the Tim Hubbard Saturday Show.

4.6 Dea Birkett, Director, Kids in Museums, commented on the project:

"Wouldn't it be wonderful if the whole world was like Falmouth Art Gallery where everybody was included? A huge number of people have been involved in this project – 120 babies, artists, different agencies, young people, children – and everyone of them makes it very special. Hundreds of people have got their hands dirty, literally, to make this project work. This is a beacon of how things can be done."

4.7 As this project was so important a fully illustrated archive book has been published as a historical record.

5. October half term

5.1 The gallery enjoyed their most successful half term with 1,141 visitors participating in the celebrations for the 15th anniversary of the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Campaign for Learning's 'Family Learning Festival'. In addition 259 people took part in a range of creating workshops including badge making, penguin collages, Picasso portraits and mask making.

5.2 Particularly popular was a talk complete with live creepy crawlies by Mark Norris of Newquay Zoo, a photographic tour of 'Darwin and the Galapagos Islands' presented by Anthony Fagin, an 'Expressions' mime performance from Brett Jackson of Swamp Circus and a cartoon workshop from celebrity *Beano* illustrator, Nick Brennan.

5.3 All the activities were funded by the Campaign for Learning (£500) and the gallery also received £250 from the Heritage Lottery Fund when they were selected as one of four venues in the region to mark their 15th anniversary.

6. The Master's Master – The Art Fund Hugh Stoneman Archive

6.1 The gallery is currently staging an exhibition celebrating the career of Hugh Stoneman (1947–2005), one of the world's most important master printmakers during the second half of the twentieth century.

6.2 In 2008 The Art Fund purchased 99 of Hugh's master prints for Falmouth Art Gallery, a cross-section that spans his outstanding career.

6.3 The works featuring in the exhibition were selected from The Art Fund Archive by GCSE students from Falmouth, Helston, Mullion and Penryn as part of a six month project linking with Kernow Education Arts Partnership. The students made their choices in the style of a Royal Academy hanging committee, and were not informed of the artist's names until after they had chosen.

6.4 The gallery is staging an exciting programme of workshops and events to accompany the exhibition. Activities include printing, clay sculpting, monoprinting, watercolour grids, making 'Sir Terry Frost-y Cards' and 'Superstar celebrity dress-up' photography.

6.5 On Saturday 14 November the distinguished author Michael Bird gave a popular talk about his book *The St Ives Artists: A Biography of Place and Time*.

6.6 The new book *The Art Fund Hugh Stoneman Archive* has now been published by Halstar. It includes full colour page reproductions of all 99 prints.

6.7 The Cornwall branch of The Art Fund staged a special evening visit to the exhibition where they were given a guided tour and talk.

7. Little Parc Owles Trust

7.1 The Little Parc Owles Trust have continued their support for the gallery by awarding £500 for artist led print workshops for local students.

7.2 St Ives artist Naomi Frears led intaglio print workshops for A-level students from Falmouth School and GCSE students from Penryn College. Naomi works from the historic Porthmeor Studios.

8. New acquisitions

8.1 The gallery has been presented with eight important paintings and drawings by the distinguished St Ives artist Tom Early (1914-1967). Encouraged by Ben Nicholson, the self taught Tom Early became part of the St Ives art colony exhibiting in London alongside artists such as Peter Lanyon, Patrick Heron, and Terry Frost. His mother allowed Ben Nicholson (who was a near neighbour) to house his motorbike in her garage, and he and Tom became close friends.

8.2 The works were generously donated by the artist's widow, Mrs Eunice Campbell. Included in the collection is Tom Early's last completed work as well as other important works illustrated in *Tom Early – The Catalogued Work* by Denys J Wilcox and Michael Miller.

8.3 The gallery is delighted to receive the gift of three works by Tom Cross (1931-2009). Tom Cross was an important figure in Cornish art. He was a distinguished artist who for many years was Principal of Falmouth School of Art. He wrote a number of books on Cornish art, including 'Catching the wave', 'The shining sands' and 'Painting the warmth of the sun'. The most important of the three works is *Landscape in Le Marche*, painted in Italy about 1956-7 when Tom had won a travelling scholarship and was based at the British School in Rome. The works were donated by the artist's widow, Mrs Patricia Cross. They will be shown in the 'Connections' exhibition in February 2010.

8.4 Simon Hendra from The Lander Gallery, Truro has generously donated a 19th century wood engraving entitled *Scene of the recent fire at Falmouth, 1862*. This fire took place at High Street, Falmouth on the morning of Saturday 12 April 1862 and was described as '*the largest and most calamitous fire that probably ever visited the county of Cornwall*'. It caused the destruction of about 30 houses. The fire spread very quickly and it soon became apparent that the only chance of arresting its progress was by pulling down houses at some safe points, not yet reached, causing a fire break. Many of the owners of the houses were uninsured and the fire left them in financial ruin.

8.5 Jane Beecroft has generously donated a portrait of the artist Gwen Whicker (1900-1966) seated with her cat, painted by her husband, Fred Whicker (1901-1966). Both Falmouth artists are highly respected and widely collected. The picture is painted in tempera and will feature in the 'Falmouth Frameworks' project.

8.6 The gallery has recently acquired, with the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund, an important painting by Cornwall's much loved artist, John Dyer. The picture shows dawn feeding time at Newquay Zoo. The artist got up at 5 am to record the event which shows zebras, bats, swans, penguins, baboons, ring tailed lemurs, tortoises and peacocks.

8.7 The large painting entitled 'Zooing around' was one of a series of successful works painted at Newquay Zoo during the summer, when John Dyer was artist in residence for the Darwin 200 celebrations.

9. AMA

9.1 Natalie Rigby has now been awarded an AMA (Associate of the Museums Association) after completing her three year course and facing a professional review panel. Falmouth Town Council would like to congratulate Natalie on her achievement.

10. Fellowship

10.1 Brian Stewart has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) which for 250 years has encouraged forward thinking and been a force for social progress.

11. Training

11.1 Natalie Rigby has attended a course entitled 'Managing your finances' which included an LSC qualification which is equivalent to a refresher Maths GCSE.

12. Kids in Museums

12.1 The Mayor of Falmouth has been invited to attend on behalf of the gallery and the town the 2010 launch of the Kids in Museums Manifesto at the British Museum in January. Falmouth is seen as a beacon of good practice and it is an honour to receive this personal invitation to this prestigious event. At the launch of Kids in Museums at the Royal Academy, Falmouth Art Gallery was the only museum to be mentioned by the guest speaker Mariella Frostrup.

13. Service in Art Gallery

13.1 Colin Brown, a Church Army officer, was licensed as 'Creative Arts Evangelist' by Bishop Tim of Truro at a special service held at the gallery on 20 July. The acoustics in the gallery were excellent and the service was extremely well attended.

13.2 Colin trained and worked as a commercial artist prior to becoming a minister. He continues to paint, exploring the spiritual aspects of art. The focus of his work is to help those who might not normally go to church to explore faith through art.

13.3 Colin also recently read the Gospel Lesson at the Mayor's Carol Service which was held in the gallery on 9 December.

14. NIRU approval

14. The gallery has now been recognised as a National Import Relief Unit approved trader by HM Revenue & Customs and can import artworks from abroad.