

Falmouth Art Gallery Annual Report 2011-12

1. Introduction

1.1 There was sadness at the start of the year following the unexpected loss on 12th December 2010 of Brian Stewart, Falmouth Art Gallery's popular and inspirational Director.

1.2 Natalie Rigby, the Art Gallery's Collections Manager, took over as Acting Director, ably supported by the Town Clerk and the Mayor of Falmouth, Geoffrey Evans. All the team at the Art Gallery coped magnificently during this very difficult time.

1.3 Natalie went on Maternity leave in August. Ruth Bott, a museum studies graduate from Leicester University, was appointed as her maternity cover.

1.4 Louise Connell was appointed as the new Director in at the start of July. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, Louise has worked extensively in museums and galleries, most recently as Senior Manager, Museum and Archive at Bolton Museum. She moved to Cornwall in 2006 where she took on the position of Trustee of the Leach Pottery alongside marketing roles for Miracle Theatre and Golowan Festival.

1.5 Louise shares the gallery's commitment to a family friendly approach and hopes to continue the successful legacy of her predecessor, Brian Stewart, while also making her own mark.

1.6 Falmouth Art Gallery has continued to provide a FREE and varied programme of exhibitions, events, talks, family workshops and community education programmes.

2. Awards

2.1 Falmouth Art Gallery's late Director Brian Stewart (1953-2010) was awarded a posthumous Lifetime Achievement award by the Museums and Heritage Awards.

2.2 The gallery was singled out by Anra Kennedy of Culture 24 as an example of best practice in community, family and inter-generational learning. She invited a member of gallery staff to give a presentation on the subject in a Culture 24 education seminar at the Museums & Heritage Show in London.

2.3 The gallery was awarded Visit England's Visitor Attraction Quality Assured Status for the fourth year running after receiving a glowing report from the *Visit Britain* inspector. She wrote, *'Falmouth Art Gallery is a great asset to the town of Falmouth. It has a wonderful attitude to customer service. This attitude is reflected not only in direct customer contact but also in the friendly and informative email responses. The staff are very knowledgeable and engage exceptionally well with visitors of all ages.'*

3. Funding & grants

3.1 The gallery was awarded a grant of £14,000 by the Arts Council to stage a New Expressions 2 project. 'A childhood with the Surrealists'. The funding was used to commission works from two artists, Andrew Lanyon and Antony Penrose, to hold an exhibition showcasing the project and to organise a community education involving local schools, families and special needs groups.

3.2 Naomi Frears, the nationally renowned artist from St Ives, delivered two print-making workshops in a project funded by a grant of £500 from the Little Parc Owles Trust.

3.3 The Heritage Lottery Funded 'John Singer Sargent Project' continues to raise awareness of Falmouth's role as a creative and cultural centre in Cornwall. The gallery has published a map marking the graves of historic artists buried in Falmouth Cemetery and has embarked on a popular series of Cemetery Tours.

3.4 This HLF grant has also supported a programme of exhibitions and events, including the summer 'blockbuster' show, 'British Impressionists' and the current exhibition 'Effortless Brushstrokes'.

4. Acquisitions

4.1 In 2011, the gallery continued to grow its art collection with a series of gifts and bequests which were accepted in accordance with its Collecting Policy.

4.2 The following paintings were received over the course of the year:

4.3 'The Weeping Ash' by Kenneth Newton (1933 – 1984) presented by Anthony and Marianne Pratt in memory of Brian Stewart; 'Rough Seas' by John Henry West (1856 – 1938) presented by Roger Miller; an important late painting by the artist Tom Early (1914 – 1967) of St Paul's Cathedral given by the artist's widow, Eunice Campbell. The gallery was also given three watercolours of local scenes by George Farquar Pennington (1872 – 1962) and artist Grace Gardner donated three of her silk screen prints and an oil painting entitled 'Forest Murmurs'.

4.4 The Art Fund purchased a large oil painting by the Falmouth artist Sophie Anderson (1823 – 1903) and presented it as a gift in celebration of the life and contribution of Brian Stewart. The work, entitled 'Roses', is thought to be the work of the same name that is listed in the catalogue of the first Falmouth Art Gallery in Grove Place.

4.5 The Art Fund also presented the gallery with an important set of prints by Ivor Abrahams RA at the request of the artist and his wife Evelyne.

4.6 Two Surrealist prints by Roland Penrose, 'More Light' and 'Bonjour Max Ernst' were given by Marcus Williamson in memory of his father.

4.7 The gallery commissioned an automaton entitled 'Brian's brilliant bike' from maker Keith Newstead. Staff thought that this would be the perfect way to remember him as it would be here for generations of families to enjoy. It was generously funded by Richard and Jaqueline Worswick.

4.8 The gallery received by bequest a large oil painting of 'Dry Dock at Falmouth' by Neil Pinkett and a delightful watercolour by Charles Napier Hemy entitled 'Race around the Dodman'.

5. Exhibitions and major loans

5.1 The Art Gallery held a changing programme of exhibitions to showcase the superb collection at Falmouth Art Gallery alongside the best of local, national and international art.

5.2 These were: 'Masters of Photography'; 'Kurt Jackson at 50'; 'British Impressionists'; 'Falmouth Frameworks', 'Historic Falmouth' and 'Fishwick and Friends'.

5.3 The 'Historic Falmouth' exhibition was one of the highlights of the year and attracted record numbers of visitors who came to see the star exhibit, the magnificently restored Falmouth Town Charter.

5.4 The Permanent Gallery continued to show changing displays from the Art Gallery's collection. For those works not out on display, the gallery continues to have an 'open stores' policy which allows people to view work in the stores accompanied by a member of staff. Every single artwork has now been catalogued and can be viewed online by visitors to the Falmouth Art Gallery website.

5.5 A group of pupils from Falmouth Primary School were 'guest curators' for the Kids in Museums Takeover Day on 11th November. They made an exciting selection of work from the new Ivor Abrahams print collection. This was the first time it had been exhibited in the Art Gallery and the event attracted plenty of local press attention.

5.6 'The Lady of Shallot' by JM Waterhouse was borrowed for an important international exhibition in Madrid entitled 'Heroines'.

5.7 A selection of work from the Children's Illustration Archive was also lent for the 'Draw Me a Story' show at Plymouth City Art Gallery.

6. Community education, talks and family workshops

6.1 The Art Gallery carried on its award-winning work, delivering a varied programme of exhibition-linked art workshops and activities, all provided free of charge.

6.2 The Saturday afternoon drop-in workshops at the gallery offered everything from stencil photographs using sun-print paper, to shadow puppets, cut-outs and collages, crowns for the Royal Wedding, all kinds of painting and drawing, felt making and textile seascapes.

6.3 The gallery provided a range of drop-in workshops throughout the school holidays. As well as the usual art and craft-based activities, the gallery invited local artists and performers to give talks and demonstrations, including artist Andrew Tozer, cartoonist Nick Brennan and magician Ed Clarke.

6.4 Falmouth Week in August got off to a flying start with the carnival workshops. Dozens of people dropped in to the Art Gallery to make brightly coloured frames to carry in the Walking Carnival. This year's theme was 'come dressed as your favourite painting'. There was an excellent turnout with 30 adults and 20 children taking part.

6.5 The gallery is still leading the way in the provision of painting activities for children under 2. The fortnightly Baby Paint sessions led by freelance educator Glyn Winchester continued to be popular and always had a waiting list.

6.6 A broad range of people used the gallery's learning provision. There were visits from the Murdoch and Trevithick Centre, Falcare, Dementia UK, Stroke Club, Age Concern and the University of the Third Age, amongst others. Local primary and secondary schools, further and higher education students, a language school and general interest groups were all welcomed over the course of the year with talks and activities.

6.7 Director Louise Connell gave two 'walk and talk' guided tours of the exhibitions in the summer and a talk to local artists at the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society. She also gave a presentation at the National Maritime Museum Cornwall on the Art Gallery's work.

7. Publications

7.1 The Director wrote an article on the Falmouth artists' colony for September's 'Here and Now' magazine and Falmouth Art Gallery published three catalogues: 'British Impressionists', 'Falmouth Frameworks' and 'Effortless Brushstrokes'.

8. The economic value of Falmouth Art Gallery

8.1 A report by the Association of Independent Museums provided a toolkit by which small and medium galleries can calculate the gross impact of visits to the gallery in terms of economic value.

8.2 Using data specific to Falmouth Art Gallery, we were able to calculate that the Art Gallery has a value of £1.45 million per year to the local economy. This data is based on the percentage of local visitors, day trippers and overnight visitors who used the Art Gallery in 2010/11.