

PAF NEWS

A bi-monthly newsletter for the Friends of the Polperro Arts Foundation

Pencil Art, by Tracy Watts

In the third issue of our newsletter, in August last year, we introduced some of Tracy's work around Polperro harbour. Since then, partly as a result of the lockdown she has turned her attention more to the lanes around her home on the edge of Polperro, resulting in some much-admired pieces such as those that she describes below.



Cornish hedgerow



Misty Cornish lane

“Most days I take my dog Winifred for walkies along the country lanes leading from my house out into the countryside. Most people will only see these lanes when speeding by in their cars and will not get to appreciate the subtle changes in the hedgerows and scenery with the on-going seasons and weather conditions. My latest work is all about the things I see on these walks

I have created these latest drawings from my own photographs. I have used graphite pencil, black pencil and black and white inks and have worked mainly on white cartridge paper, the texture of this paper helps to create the realistic road surfaces.

I take photos on my phone and convert them to black and white using my computer. I sometimes play with the contrast in all or parts of the photo to get the effect I am after.

The drawings are like magic to me. I can create a new dreamy atmospheric world which is far more enchanting than any photo I could take as I can add, remove and change whatever I like. For example I added the butterfly in my ‘Cornish hedgerow’.

The first things I will usually draw are the large black areas using ink, then I begin to build up the drawing using graphite for distance and delicate detail and go in with the black pencil for texture. I am more loose with the black pencil. The final touch is the highlights using white ink and a fine paint brush. Each piece takes me from two to four days depending on the subject and detail, but I could never have imagined that I could get so much pleasure from drawing muddy old country lanes.”

You will find more of Tracy’s work on her website here: <<https://tracywattsart.com>>



Hedge shadows



Cornish lane



Flooded lane and gateway

Polperro's Art History - the 1890s

More notes from David Tovey's book, Polperro – Cornwall's Forgotten Art Centre (2021)

In Chapter 5 of his book - The end of the Victorian era - David tells us that from a historian's perspective probably the most notable feature of Polperro's art history in the 1890s was the village's failure to attract resident artists in the way that was already well advanced elsewhere in Cornwall. And this was despite the widely recognised and enduring picturesque quality of the place. In 1891 the author Bertha Couch wrote: "In the summer, for persons with artistic tastes, [Polperro] stands unrivalled, every point presenting the picturesque and every object a study."



William Croxford, By the harbour, Polperro

But counting against the village as a place to live and work were a lack of studio space and suitable housing, pungent smells from the fishing industry and poorly developed sewage system, and relative inaccessibility prior to the opening of passenger train services from the main line at Liskeard to Looe in 1901. So the art of this period was mainly from visitors, albeit some such as William Croxford and Tom Clough made regular trips over many years.

Aside from setting out its history of art David's book provides a valuable pictorial history of the village itself, especially the harbour area, although in some paintings we do have to allow for a certain amount of artistic licence; somehow the hillsides often seem a little steeper and craggier than in the everyday real world. And boating experts may notice changes in the design of fishing boats shown in later paintings with the introduction of 'gaffers' following the destruction of many older vessels by a storm in 1891.

An Act of Parliament in 1894 set up new management arrangements whereby the harbour would be



Stuart Lloyd, Polperro

managed by the Harbour Trustees independent of the Parish Council, an arrangement that continues in the 21st century. Following the Act, in 1897 the trustees were able to undertake some much-needed changes to the inner and outer piers, making them shorter and longer respectively, and creating an entrance narrow enough to be protected by wooden baulks on stormy days. Tom Clough's painting, below, clearly shows the foreshortened inner pier.

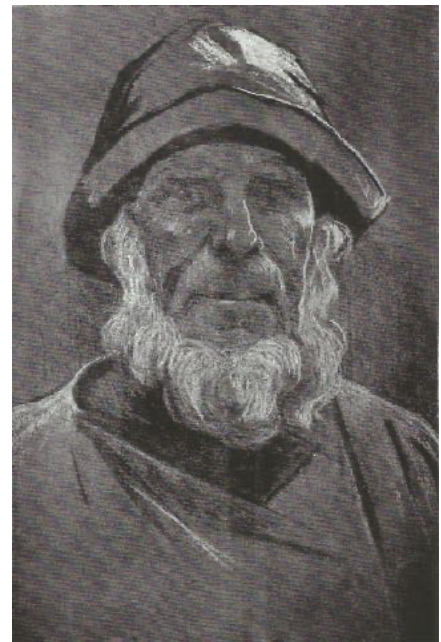


Thomas Hart, Harbourside properties, The Warren, Polperro

house on Talland Hill that she shared with her husband Frank. David sets out the backgrounds, careers and exhibiting histories of each of these and many others.

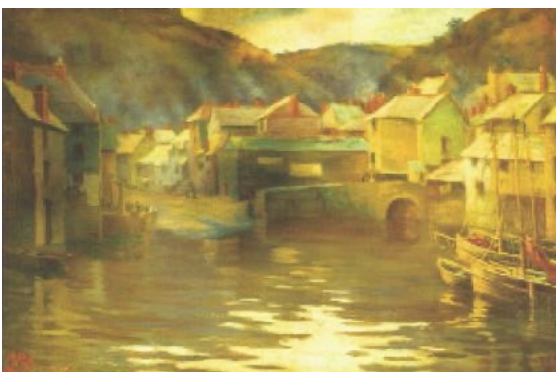
Compared with earlier decades, a noticeable feature of the artists who David highlights for the 1890s was the increase in the numbers of female artists. Of the 27 names he mentions, 11 were women. Moreover in what must have been one of the village's most talked about events of the decade, in 1894 the well-known French artist Auguste Delécluse arranged a three-month long class which was attended by no less than 30 female art students. David describes how they set up their easels all round the village and on the surrounding cliffs and occupied every spare room in Polperro. Perhaps we should try something similar now.

From David's account, the artists from the 1890s who stood out were William Croxford and Tom Clough, mentioned above, together with Stuart Lloyd and the portrait artists Sophie Pemberton and Carlos Grethe both of whom appear to have drawn the photogenic John Minards among other works. Maud Perry-Coste was a full time resident of the village and her initials are still embossed above the door of the



Sophie Pemberton, John Minards

David Tovey's two-volume, 600-page work can be purchased from his website <www.stivesart.info/art-in-polperro>. Copies are also available in the village at the Post Office and in our own PAF gallery at the village hall.



Maud Perry-Coste, A corner of the harbour



Tom Clough, Polperro (post 1897)

About the Foundation

The Foundation was set up in 2001 to support and promote local established and aspiring artists and to increase awareness of locally-produced art and the long history of art in Polperro. After 19 years at the Chapel Rock gallery in Foresters Hall overlooking the inner harbour, in 2020 the PAF moved to its present site in the Polperro village hall next door to the Crumplehorn Inn.

Our Team

Currently we have eight exhibiting members all of whom live and work locally: **Barbara Ellis**, artist; **Sandy Horton**, glass; **Paul Lightfoot**, photographer, writer, newsletter editor; **Sue Lord**, artist; **Charles Summers**, artist and fan-maker; **Babs Taylor**, artist; **Tracy Watts**, graphic designer and illustrator; and **Lisa Woollett**, author and photographer. **Jennie Hale** is our guest artist.

What we offer

- We **exhibit** an extensive, evolving collection of local art works in our gallery in the Polperro village hall.
- We arrange and host occasional **events** for the benefit of local residents and visitors.
- We circulate this free **newsletter** six times each year; email us to suggest others who might like a copy.
- At these links you will find freely-available examples of our work as [screen-savers](#), [desktop wallpaper](#) and in other formats to bring a taste of Polperro and its art to your home computers, tablets and phones.

Support us

Please let us know if you would like to join us as an artist, Friend or volunteer.

Contact us

Our gallery is open daily, normally from 11am until 5pm, or 4pm as the days shorten. Alternatively please contact us by email <polperroarts@gmail.com> or through our website: <www.polperroarts.org>

