

PAF NEWS

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

Christmas



As usual at this time of year our 're-hang' committee, principally Sandy and Tracy, have tweaked our displays to introduce some Christmas spirit to the gallery. So in addition to our standing collections of paintings, photographs, books and craft items, from now until the New Year we are also featuring:

Sandy's Christmas trees, giant snowflakes, tree lights, tin mines and snowmen all in fused glass;

"The fairy catcher" Tracy's fairies and Jack Frosts, some of them cleverly captured and looking a little surprised staring out of jam jars;

Babs Taylor's six-foot long, finely patterned and meticulously sewn-up bunting;

and Barbara Ellis's paintings of 'moled wine', 'luxury picnic hamsters' and 'pigs in blankets', all in her inimitable charmingly quirky style.



We are also introducing Rachel Brown from nearby Lerryn who joins us as a guest artist. Rachel works in mixed media textiles to create machine-embroidered subjects from the natural world; we are showing a variety of her fish, including the two examples below.

These pictures will give you a taste but do visit us for a better look. And keep in mind the Christmas Market in Polperro's Methodist chapel on 11-12th December, where we will have a stall.



Polperro's Art History - the Edwardian Age, 1901 to 1914

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

The period from the death of Queen Victoria to the start of the First World War saw such a proliferation of artistic work in Polperro that David Tovey devotes three full chapters to it. Chapter 6 covers the work and lives of eight artists who considered the village their home for at least a few years.

In Chapters 7 and 8 we are introduced to more than sixty visitors, many of whom returned repeatedly. About half of them

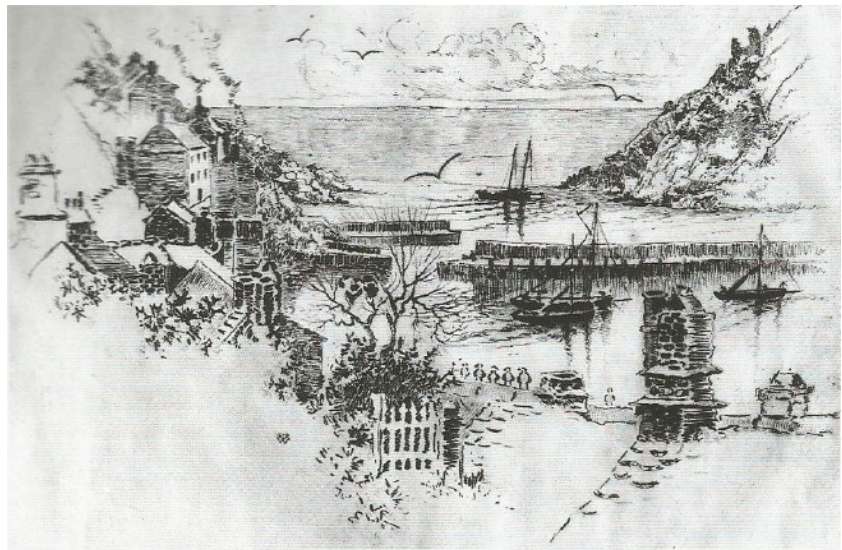
were British and the rest predominantly American but including also two Germans, a New Zealander and a Dutchman. No doubt there will have been numerous others who were less well known, and such were the numbers involved that already in 1911 a magazine article described Polperro in the summer months as being 'invaded by long-haired artists', far from its usual characterisation as just a quaint and rather backward historic fishing village.

Many of the visitors were drawn to Polperro by a series of widely advertised art classes arranged by two of the residents, Edward Ertz, who was originally American, and the long-time resident Herbert Butler; and Henry Bayley Snell, Head of the Philadelphia College of Design for Women, regularly brought his art classes to the village. In describing all this, David Tovey presents a fascinating account of the social and professional networks that attracted so much talent to what was still at that time quite a remote corner of England.

Ertz had discovered Polperro from his time in Paris with Auguste Delécluse, who had arranged art classes in the village in 1894 as we saw in the last issue. From 1901 to 1905 Ertz and his wife Ethel, also an artist, settled in Polperro and ran an art school.



Herbert Butler, a detail from 'Politics'



Edward Ertz, View over Polperro

Soon after their departure Butler set up a studio in front of his house on Talland Hill where he conducted classes and produced a wide range of his own work in oils, water colours and pencil; and writing in various art journals he promoted the village as "a place of happy inspiration for both figure and landscape painter ... a place where one can work quietly and live unostentatiously. What more does an

artist desire?" What indeed, our modern PAF members might ask.

Of the other resident artists John Robertson Reid seems to have been the most prolific and David includes several examples of his work. 'The Shipwright' was shown at the Royal Academy in 1908.

While Polperro's attractions were well known elsewhere in Britain, Europe and in the USA, during this period surprisingly few artists from other Cornish art communities appear to have worked here. Walter Langley was an exception, a Newlyn artist who "never fails to invest his pictures with a touch of domesticity and simplicity," his "Evening, Polperro" being one example.

As we have seen in earlier periods, aside from their aesthetic value some of these works provide a valuable record of structural changes in the village, especially around the inner and outer harbour. That said, there are also many examples of considerable artistic licence. In his "Harbour End" Sidney Endacott decided to replicate the props of what is now known as the House on the Props downriver for a better view. In his "The boats return home" Claus Bergen moved the inner quay across the harbour. The famous American Thomas Moran's widely admired "Polperro, a fishing village of Cornwall" is a mystical, almost Turneresque and barely recognisable view of the inner harbour, possibly completed from sketches long after Moran left the village. Compare his distinctive style with those of the four paintings on the next page by Endacott, Bergen, Chapman and Lockwood.

Although Herbert Butler continued to live and work in the village until his death in 1931, in other respects the First World War brought big changes to the art world and Polperro was especially affected, as we will see in the next issue.



John Robertson Reid, The shipwright



Walter Langley, Evening, Polperro



Thomas Moran, Polperro, a fishing village of Cornwall



Sidney Endacott, Harbour end, Polperro



Claus Bergen, The boats return home



Carlton Theodore Chapman, Polperro



Florence E Lockwood, Low tide, Polperro

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

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** and **Rachel Brown** are our guest artists.

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 4pm during the winter months. Alternatively please contact us by email <polperroarts@gmail.com> or through our website: <www.polperroarts.org>