

PAF NEWS

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

'Reflections on a March Afternoon, Polperro Harbour'

by

Sue Lord, 2020

Oil painting 64 x 64 cm.



When I was asked, last year, to paint a harbour scene I realised how long it had been since I'd done one and I had also forgotten how really difficult it is to capture the light and the atmosphere.

I wanted a clear, blue sky with interesting reflections so waited for a high tide and a sunny afternoon. I bought some full-length waders but sensibly decided to row out in my little boat instead.

There is a particular spot in the middle of the harbour which has always fascinated me where you can look past 'The Blue Peter' and you don't see the 'Net Loft'. When it does come into view it can look quite menacing as one of the windows looks like an eye.

I sat quietly in my boat, camera at hand, absorbing the colours and the movement of the water as the tide reached its high point. It was still and quiet with no-one in sight and so very beautiful.

I found a piece of thick plywood being discarded outside a shop, cut it to size, primed it with emulsion mixed with glue and covered it with bleached calico. Another few coats of primer, a light sanding and it was ready to paint.

I use board instead of canvas because I paint a lot with my hands and fingers and so prefer a surface that withstands the pressure.

I love using oil paints because of their flexibility and flow and the really subtle blends of colours that can be discovered. I'm self-taught so have found this way of working over the years and, for me, it's quite a long process of gradually building up the layers of paint until it feels right. This one took six months which is quite good for me; in the final two months I was managing about a square inch a day



I particularly enjoy creating the shadowy areas, trying to get the depth of the colours, changing and receding, never black.

I spent a lot of time on the space outside 'The Blue Peter' where your eye is led to the sky beyond. The textured walls of Polperro cottages are also quite challenging as are the reflections. It's so important to try and get the water to seem to move; years of looking and really seeing have helped with that....

Boats are always fascinating to paint; all sit individually and differently in the water, affected by ballast, rainwater and all sorts of gear and gubbins.

The colours in the reflections and the sunlight on the cottages, for me, give the painting a real glow, similar to the light you see when you sit on 'The Slip' in the early morning, outside the museum.

This painting is now in Herefordshire. Happily I have a same-size print in my kitchen so can still vanish off into it and enjoy the special atmosphere of Polperro in springtime.

Sue Lord

Framed and unframed prints of 'Reflections on a March afternoon' are available in the PAF gallery at the Polperro village hall, together with many other examples of Sue's work.

Polperro's art history - the 1860s and 1870s

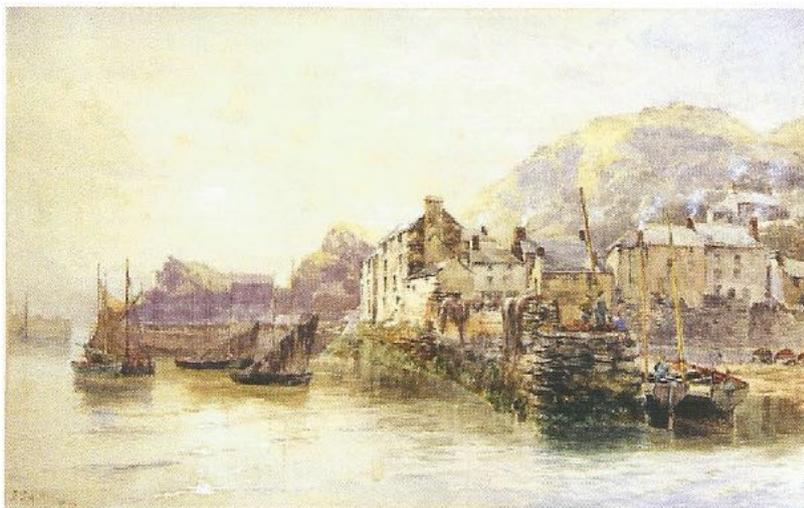
Notes from David Tovey's book, Polperro – Cornwall's Forgotten Art Centre (2021)

As we have seen in previous issues of the PAF newsletter, the history of serious art depicting Polperro dates from the early 19th century with the work of the engravers Joseph Farington and William Daniell, and of William Linton whose 'English Channel - Polperrow Bay' is the earliest known painting of the village.

By the 1860s and 1870s, covered in chapter 3, volume 1 of David's book, this part of the county was



William Linton, English Channel - Polperrow Bay



John Squire, Polperro

still relatively inaccessible: Looe station was not fully connected with Liskeard for passenger services until 1901. Therefore most of the first artists who did find their way to Polperro were from Cornwall or nearby Plymouth where an active arts society was becoming established.

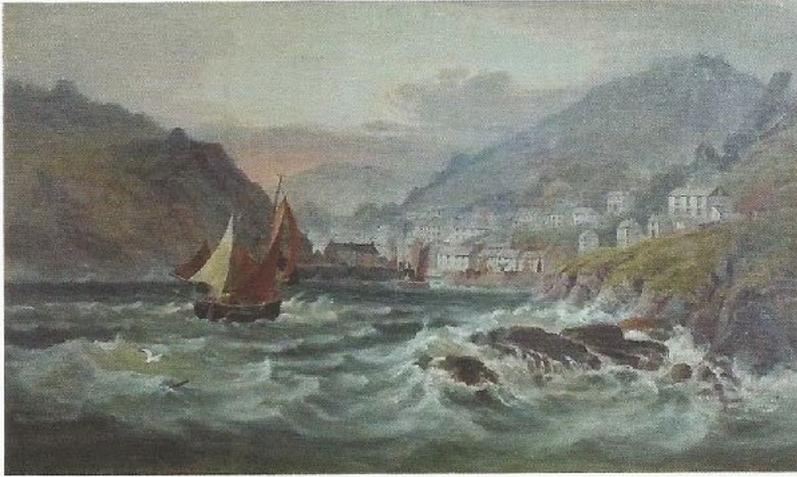
John Squire for example was born and brought up in Liskeard. While pursuing a career in banking,

fathering eight children and developing a talent as an amateur violinist, Squire still found time to produce some widely exhibited watercolour landscapes such as the one above.

William Gibbons is another artist from this period who David Tovey highlights. In 1874 the Western Morning News described Gibbons's 'A Misty Evening, Polperro' as a "happy management of light and shade,



William Gibbons, A Misty Evening, Polperro



William Gibbons, The Entrance to Polperro Harbour

Morning News and David includes several examples.

Regrettably it seems that a number of important works from this period have disappeared, including 'Polperro - An Old Smuggling Village' by Francis Sylvester Walker which was judged to be the best seascape of the season at the Royal Academy in 1879.



William Gibbons, Polperro Storm



William Pike, Polperro Village

Perhaps worst of all is the case of Annie Hodge Thomas who exhibited paintings of Polperro in both 1877 and 1889. After her death in 1939 her family threw all her paintings and sketches down a local mine shaft "to protect her privacy."

Fortunately for all of us David Tovey's work shows that there is much to admire among the pieces that survive.

This two-volume, 600-page work can be purchased directly from the author, details are available on 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.

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 and **Jacky Humby** is our secretary.

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. Alternatively please contact us by email <polperroarts@gmail.com> or through our website: <www.polperroarts.org>

