

PAF NEWS

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

Polperro School Display



In previous newsletters we have mentioned that this year we are delighted to be able to support a programme of art-related activities at the Polperro school. As part of that programme local artist Sean Hewitt has taught a series of supplementary art classes, culminating in a display of the children's work in the centre of the PAF gallery during 19th-22nd May. The display included a piece of work from each of the school's 109 pupils. Here are Sean's thoughts on the experience:

"Abstract art is a bit like Marmite - you either get it or you don't. Its concepts are often difficult to understand and some are willing to dismiss it without fully understanding it as an art form. As an abstract painter who has worked with children for over forty years I can honestly tell you they absolutely do get it.

Working with all of the children at Polperro Primary Academy aged between 5 and 11, without exception they were totally engaged in the project in which I asked them to explore balancing shape and colour in



imaginative ways. We looked at the work of Matisse and Kandinsky and other abstract artists, we did basic exercises in linear drawing in relation to shape and colour but above all we spent a lot of time discussing and making decisions on what colour worked with another and what didn't - on which shape worked in a particular way and

which one didn't. We made decisions. These were high order thinking skills and they did it as if it were second nature. Abstract artists will tell you part of their aim and their philosophy is to get back to a state of mind uncluttered by formal thinking or expectation of what a painting or a 'picture' should look like. I was 'wowed!' on many an occasion looking at their outcomes thinking 'why can't I come up with something like that'.



Above all I am so, so proud of them. It's been not only fun but such a rewarding experience and their understanding, thought and passion is clearly visible in this selection of work."

The display opened with a gathering of head teachers, teachers, parents and children on 19th May, resulting in sales of the cards from the children's work worth almost £200 - another benefit for the school. In case you missed it, the children's work will be on display at the school for a while and we hope to be able to support similar programmes in future years.

Open Studios

During Saturday 28th May to Sunday 5th June the PAF will take part in the annual Open Studios programme. Under the programme, participating artists from all over Cornwall open their studios at the same time, creating a county-wide festival of art, design and craft for visitors to enjoy. More than 200 artists will be welcoming visitors into their studios. Above all, it's an opportunity for people to meet the present generation of working artists and chat about their work, the methods and equipment they use and plans for the future.

In the PAF gallery in the Polperro village hall, visitors will see paintings by Barbara Ellis, Sue Lord, Charles Summers and Barbara Taylor; pencil and ink work by Tracy Watts; and photographs and books by Lisa Woollett and Paul Lightfoot. We will also have copies of the Open Studios guide to all the participants throughout the county. Included among them and opening their home studios will be our own Rachel Brown (embroidery) at St Veep near Lerryn PL22 0PF and Sandy Horton (glass) at Portlooe between Polperro and Looe PL13 2HY.

**OPEN STUDIOS
CORNWALL**
28 MAY - 5 JUNE 2022

**Welcome
to the
Polperro Arts Foundation**

CREATIVE HERITAGE
POLPERRO ARTS FOUNDATION
OPENSTUDIOSCORNWALL.CO.UK

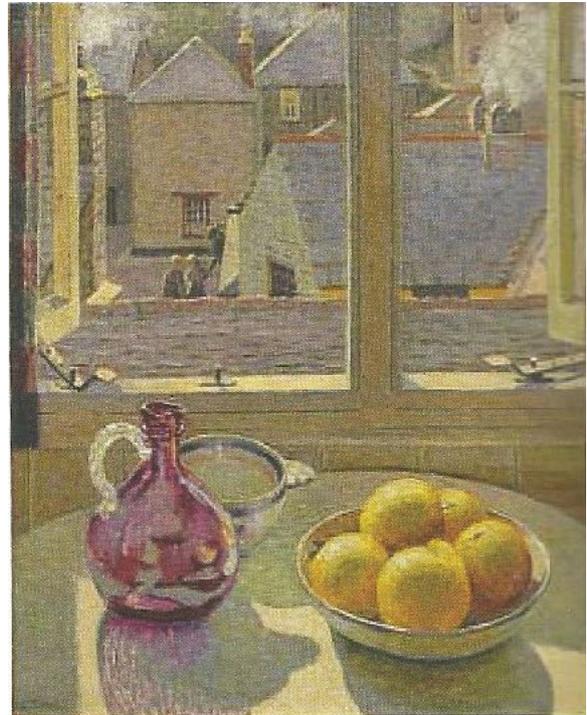


Polperro's Art History - the 1930s

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

In 1936 an article in the Sunderland Daily Echo described Polperro as “the haunt of half the artists of Britain”, and David suggests that the 1930s saw the heyday of art in Polperro. However that assessment is not based on the numbers of artists who were resident in the village but rather on the numbers of visitors and the numbers of pictures of the village appearing in galleries around the country. Polperro almost rivalled St Ives in the frequency with which it is painted, according to the Western Morning News in 1934.

Herbert Butler who had been directly or indirectly responsible for attracting many artists over the previous 40 years died in 1931, and his friend Charles Boutwood was no longer active for several years prior to his death in 1937. Therefore only Mary Richey could be considered resident for any significant period; she was based in the village from about 1930 to 1936 and exhibited in various galleries around the country, including her own solo show in 1936.

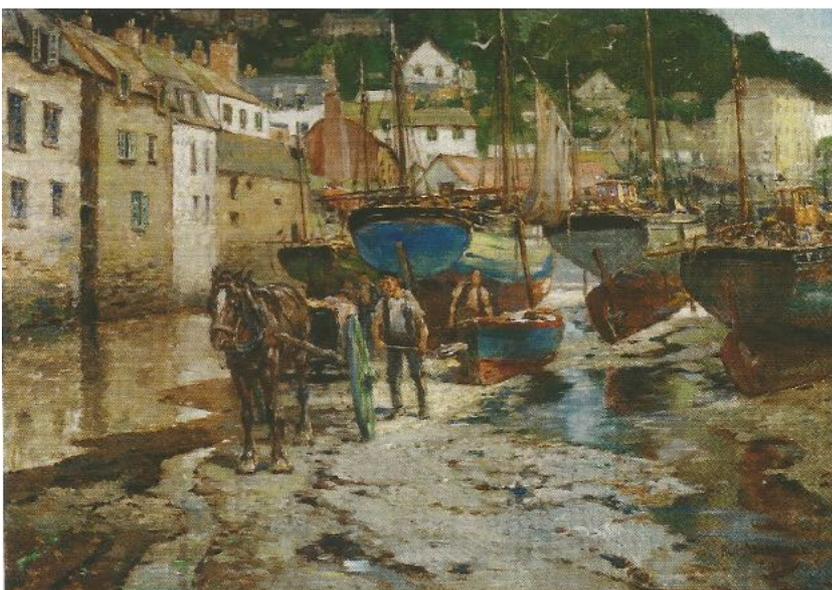


Mary Richey, Still life in a Polperro window

David presents the lives and work of more than 50 visiting artists who came for varying periods during the 1930s, some just once and others repeatedly. They came mainly from homes within this country but also from Australia, the USA, Europe and even China: Teng-Hiok Chiu produced a number of pieces showing scenes from around the harbour, merging styles from his Asian and British backgrounds. In

1935 the American Paul Ashbrook produced a particularly striking view of the inner harbour.

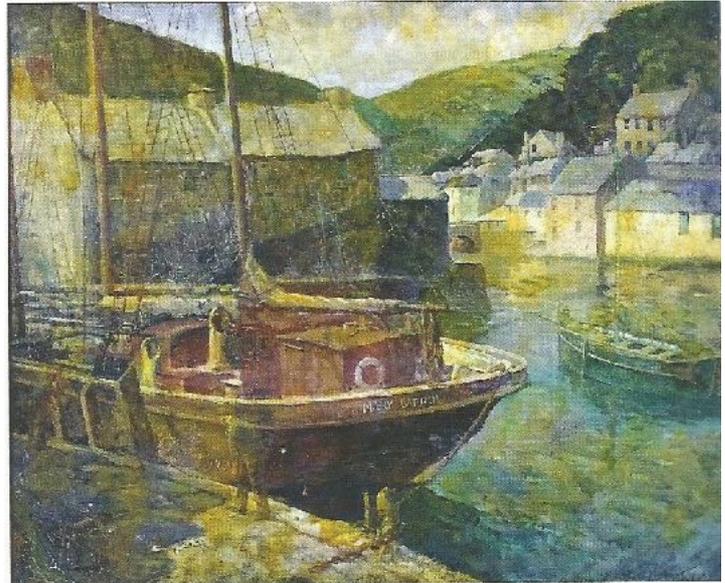
As always, aside from their artistic value paintings from this period are often of historical interest. Marcus Holmes' 1938 painting shows the schooner *Mary Barrow* which was a regular visitor to the harbour for many years, supplying much of Polperro's coal. Maurice Miles' 'You can be sure of Shell' and Philip Maurice Hill's GWR railway pictures will have boosted the local tourist industry.



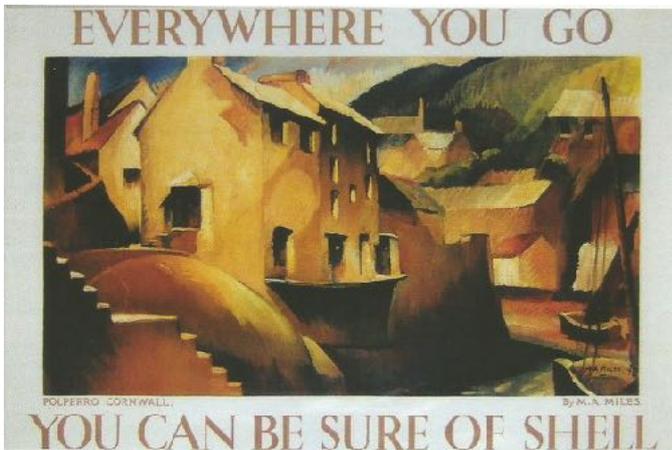
Paul Ashbrook, Low tide, Polperro

A significant visitor at the end of the decade was the Italian artist Pierro Sansalvadore, who demonstrated some interesting techniques with a palette knife which attracted attention in themselves. Ironically perhaps, his visit coincided with the end of Polperro's pilchard trading links with Italy. There had been a series of business disputes, and links were finally severed following Italy's declaration of war in 1940. The loss of the pilchard factories dealt a serious blow to the local fishing industry.

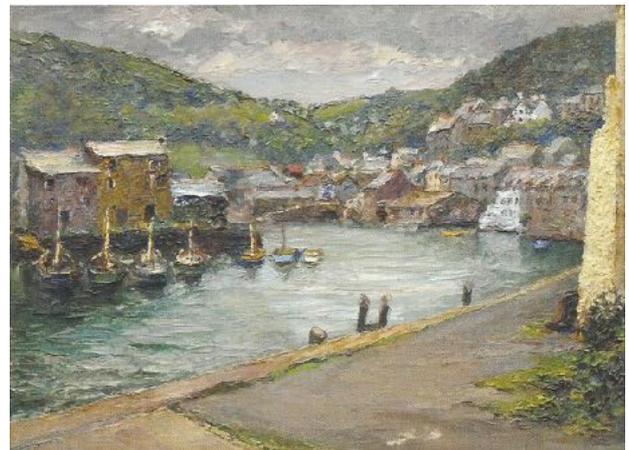
As well as artists, Polperro has attracted many writers, and David devotes a chapter to a number of them who were politically active and expressed themselves in both



Marcus Holmes, *The schooner Mary Barrow at Polperro*

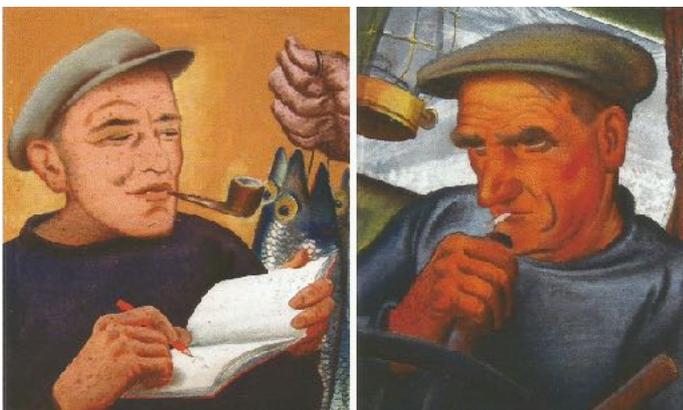


Philip Maurice Hill, *Polperro*



Pierro Sansalvadore, *Polperro*

words and pictures during this period. The most notable were the novelist Walter Greenwood, author of the widely reviewed and read *'Love on the Dole'* in 1933; Frederick Roberts Johnson who produced some striking portraits of local fishermen; and, most prolific, the cartoonist and surrealist Arthur Wragg.



Roberts Johnson, *caricatures of Polperro fishermen*



Arthur Wragg, *Polperro fishermen*

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. David has assembled a collection of paintings of Polperro which will be on display at the Falmouth art gallery until 18th June. It's a wonderful exhibition, beautifully presented, and well worth a visit. Below is a taster, but the paintings are so much better in real life.



After the Falmouth exhibition, arrangements are being made for displays of parts of David's personal collection of Polperro art works in the Methodist Chapel. Some of the larger pieces will be on permanent display within the main body of the chapel while others will be stored and made available for occasional exhibitions.

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 our present site in the Polperro Village Hall next door to the Crumplehorn Inn.

Our Team

Currently we have nine exhibiting members all of whom live and work locally: **Rachel Brown** embroiderer; **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** (ceramics) is our guest artist, soon to be joined by **Stephen Morton** (potter) . **Marian Joyce** kindly volunteers for us.

Let us know if you would like to join us as an artist or volunteer.

Contact us

The gallery in the Polperro Village Hall is open daily from 11am until 5pm. We are always available by email at <polperroarts@gmail.com> or through our website: <www.polperroarts.org>