

# PAF NEWS

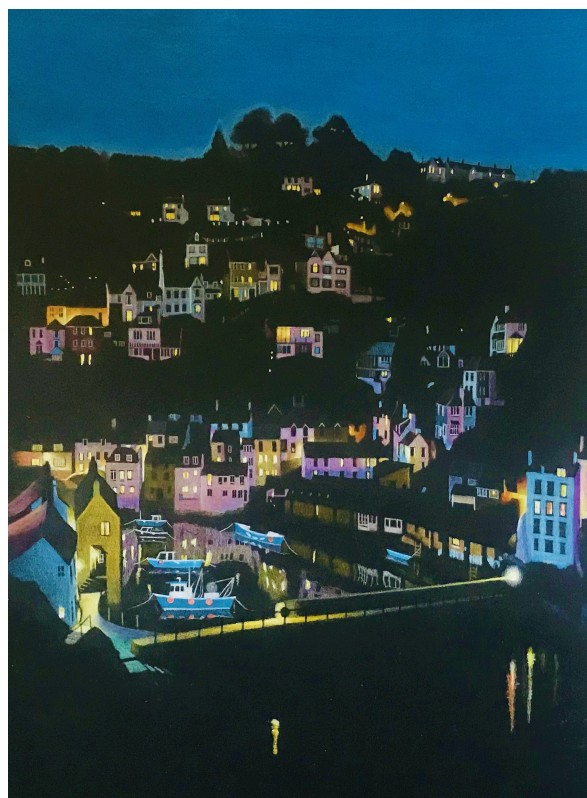
A bi-monthly newsletter for the Friends of the Polperro Arts Foundation

## The Fairy Catcher

Welcome to our third PAF newsletter in which we are featuring some of the work of Tracy Watts. After training as a graphic designer and illustrator and working for advertising agencies in London and the West Midlands, Tracy now lives and works in Polperro and runs a giftware business called 'The Fairy Catcher'. She designs models and moulds, casts and paints products for her business; and she illustrates mainly with coloured pencils taking inspiration from the local environment and animals of all kinds. This is how Tracy describes some of her most popular pieces:



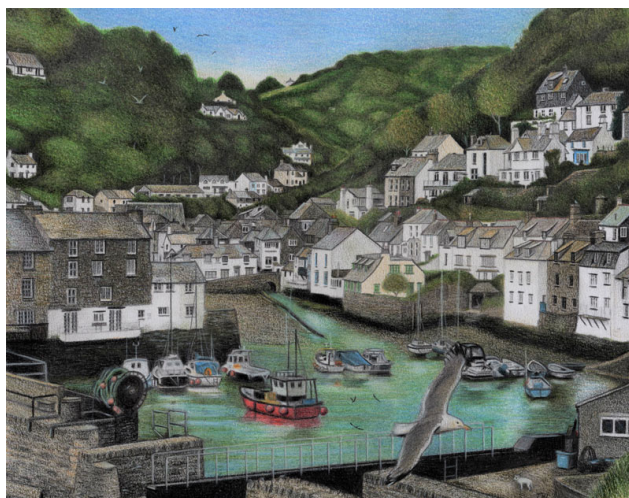
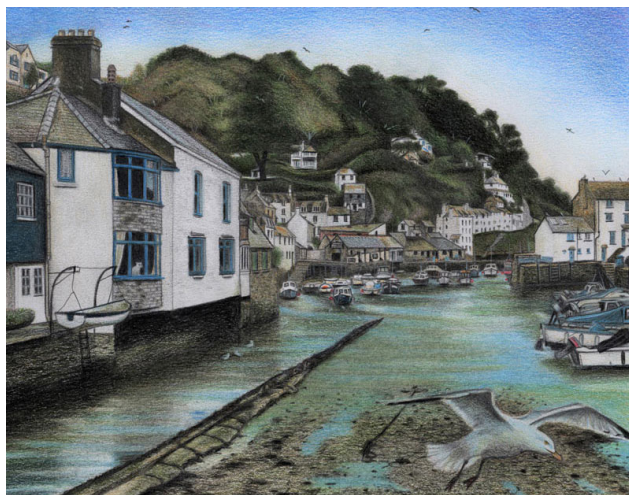
"Most of my work starts with a piece of black card, I enjoy bringing light out of the darkness. I have used pencil for all my work. When I drew 'The Lion's Mane Jellyfish' (60cmx30cm, left) I used photos of jellyfish for reference and tried to create a mystical dream-like presence. Drawing the tentacles is my favourite bit, creating depth





and movement. 'Harbour lights' (30x50cm, above, right) is one of many pictures of Polperro I have drawn over the years, I used two photos, one taken in the day and one at night for reference.

"My 'Polperro 1887 and 2018' drawings (below) are part of an ongoing project to record many areas of Polperro past and present. I am aiming to bring the past back to life through colour. This is very time-consuming and involves a lot of research and concentration. I now have a large collection of old photos to help me with this, living in Polperro helps greatly as I know the Polperro environment very well. These drawings are on white cartridge and the originals are 20x30cm. I enjoy drawing the past the most, I get so involved in this and can almost believe I am back there."



The harbour in 1887 ... and in 2018

You can see more of Tracy's work on her website [here](#).





## From the history books

For several years the art historian David Tovey has been researching the remarkable history of Polperro as the centre of an artistic community. Here, David summarises the life and work of Harry Williams, Polperro's first resident artist:



Polperro, 1882, Harry J Williams

"If one discounts Jonathan Couch, a talented amateur, the first professional artist to be referred to regularly as 'of Polperro' was Henry John Williams (1854-1901), most frequently referred to as Harry J. Williams. He appears to have lived in the village for several years during the mid-1880s.

"Williams was born in Dalston, East London, but his father, John, then a commercial clerk, came from Gulval, near Penzance, and his mother, Mary, came from Devonport. By 1871, however, the family had moved to 26 St James' Place, Plymouth, where John Williams now worked as a cabinet maker. Harry, then aged 17, already described himself as an artist, and he was still living at home in Plymouth in 1881. In 1874, however, he contributed to the joint exhibition of the Penzance and Truro Schools of Art in Truro, and so probably studied under Harry Geoffroi either at Penzance or when he also assumed responsibility for Truro. His 1875 exhibit of a Tintagel subject at the Society of British Artists has a London exhibiting address, which may indicate a spell in an art school there as well, but he also is recorded as a member of the Plymouth Art Club that year.

"A dated work indicates that he painted in Polperro in 1880, but he first gets a mention as



Polperro, Outer Quay, 1886, Harry J Williams

a Polperro resident when he exhibited a 'grand' painting of Polperro at the Bath and West Show at Cardiff in 1882. This may be the work dated 1882 (above), which shows the view out to sea from the bottom of the slipway. This is of particular interest for its depiction of the area that became, just a few years later, the Teglio Pilchard Factory (now Polperro Museum). On the seaward side of a large, open yard is a very substantial wall, with a building in one corner with a tiled, odd-shaped roof. This had been the Consona boatyard, for which the slipway had been built. However, the artist does not indicate any shipbuilding activity and the yard area seems empty, with just a couple of men chatting.

"During the years 1883-6, Williams exhibited a number of Polperro subjects at a range of West Country exhibitions, and several of these received praise for their 'splendid colour harmony' and for his handling of mellow light. Interestingly, he often used the term 'East Cornwall' to describe the Polperro locality. He may have moved away towards the end of the decade and, by 1891, he was living in Morrab Road, Penzance. In 1892, he married there a widow, Elizabeth Emma Stevens, but he died prematurely in 1901, aged just 47."

David is writing a two-volume book on the history of art in Polperro up to 1960, and is arranging an exhibition, 'Polperro - Cornwall's Forgotten Art Centre,' that will run at the Falmouth Art Gallery from 28th March to 12th June 2021. David's website is [here](#).

## News from the gallery

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We are moving! Since the Foundation was formed in 2001 it has occupied the first floor of the Foresters Hall overlooking Polperro's inner harbour. But over the last few months a new opportunity has opened for us at the Village Hall at the top end of the village next to the Crumplehorn Inn. After discussions with the Polperro Community Council (Parish Council) which owns the Hall we decided that the enforced period of closure during this Spring and Summer presents a rare opportunity to undertake the challenging process of relocation.

While we will miss the old gallery with its attractive display space and fine view over the harbour there is much to look forward to in our new premises. Originally built as the Polperro school, there are plans to see the building develop as a cultural hub for the village of which we hope to be a part. We will have sole occupancy of the 'Youth Room' which is just a few steps from the main pedestrian route into the village, a similar size to Foresters Hall, well lit, with good supporting services and most importantly, with the potential to take on the look and feel of a genuinely professional gallery.

At the time of writing we have moved our furniture and materials to the Village Hall and much of the preparation of the space set aside for us has been done. We hope to be ready to re-open in September provided that by then lockdown rules are relaxed enough for us to do so. We will let you know exactly when we will re-open through our Facebook page.

Meanwhile there are some updates from our previous newsletter:

Lisa's book **Rag and Bone** was launched on 2nd July as planned and Lisa has been actively promoting it, including some high-profile interviews on the BBC's Radio 4. There has been promising progress towards restoring the **Loudan** painting; we will continue to report on this as further news emerges. The draw for the **raffle** of a framed print of Sue Lord's painting "Ducks on the way to 'The Props', Polperro harbour" took place in the Post Office on 31st July. The winner, a very deserving local lady, is delighted with her prize. Many thanks to all who bought tickets.

## About the Foundation

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The Foundation was set up by a group of talented local artists in 2001 who were keen to continue the long tradition of promoting the arts in Polperro. We have arranged and been involved in many art and musical events and activities ever since. Find out more about us and our past achievements on our website at the link below.

### *Our Team*

Currently we have seven full members all of whom live and work locally: **Barbara Ellis**, artist; **Sandy Horton**, glass; **Paul Lightfoot**, photographer and writer; **Sue Lord**, artist; **Babs Taylor**, artist; **Tracy Watts**, graphic designer and illustrator; and **Lisa Woollett**, author and photographer. Four guest artists have work displayed in the gallery: **Rosamund Jane**, artist; **Charles Summers**, artist and fan-maker; **Nicola Sweetzer-Sturt**, artist; and **Brian Trudeau**, wood and glass sculptor. We also have an invaluable group of volunteers: **Chris Starnes**, **Helen and Peter Hickey**, **Frieda Hill** and **Jacky Humby**.

### *What we offer*

- We **exhibit** an extensive, evolving collection of local art works in an attractive and convenient setting near the entrance to Polperro.
- We arrange and host occasional **events** for the benefit of local residents and visitors. Our website lists the many events and activities that we have hosted and supported over the years.
- We will circulate this free **newsletter** six times each year; email us at the address below to suggest others who might like a copy. Future issues will feature work by our members; our own events and other events from the local art scene; plans for 'open studios'; and more 'from the history books'.
- We offer 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*

Renting, insuring and maintaining the gallery is expensive and we need your support, particularly during this extremely difficult period. Please click [here](#) to make a donation through [PayPal](#) or visit our website at the link below for other options. Thank you for any help you can give!

### *Contact us*

You will always be welcome to drop into the gallery when we re-open, meanwhile contact us by email or through our website: Email: [polperroarts@gmail.com](mailto:polperroarts@gmail.com) Website: [www.polperroarts.org](http://www.polperroarts.org)

