



**ANCHOR
STUDIO**



**LITTLE
PENLEE**



**ABBEY
SLIP
100**

ARTEFACT

The Newsletter of the Friends of Penlee House

Volume 8/Issue 4/September 2021

Discovering Anchor Studio: An artist's haven in Newlyn 25 September 2021 until 8 January 2022



Stanhope Forbes (1857-1947), *Gala Day at Newlyn, Cornwall*. Oil on canvas, Hartlepool Museums and Heritage Service

Our next exhibition will celebrate the history of Anchor Studio in Newlyn. It was built especially for Stanhope Forbes (1857 – 1947), the leading figure of the Newlyn School, who used it for sixty years. When his famous School of Painting was in operation, generations of artists knew it as Forbes' central teaching studio.

After Forbes' death in 1947 it was bought by John Wells (1907 – 2000), one of the principal St Ives Modernists, who had spent the war years as a GP on the Isles of Scilly. He preferred to live and work in Newlyn and he named the studio after an old iron anchor he found in its

overgrown garden. When Wells died in 2000 he bequeathed Anchor Studio and the nearby studios in Trewarveneth Street, to the Borlase Smart Trust: it was then re-named the Borlase Smart John Wells Trust. Chris Hibbert, Manager of the Borlase Smart John Wells Trust, tells us more about the renovation project on page 2.

The exhibition will feature paintings by Stanhope Forbes and John Wells - two artists whose work spans 120 years, from the early Newlyn School to mid-twentieth century modernism. In addition, the

exhibition includes works by fellow artists such as Ben Nicholson, Peter Lanyon, Christopher Wood and Bryan Wynter, which give context to the changing art movements over the period that Anchor has been in operation as an artists' studio. Also included are archives and photographs, as well as a record of work-in-progress throughout the meticulous renovation project led by Conservation Architect Rolfe Kentish.

This exhibition has been generously supported by the Friends of Penlee House.

There is a book to accompany the exhibition. *The Story of Anchor Studio*, edited by Elizabeth Knowles, is available in the Penlee House shop for £10.

the FRIENDS of
PENLEE HOUSE
— ⊕ —
Gallery & Museum

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ANCHOR STUDIO

Chris Hibbert, Manager of the Borlase Smart John Wells Trust tells us more about the renovation project.



Anchor Studio in May 2020 before the renovation

The Grade II* Anchor Studio has been at the heart of cultural life in Newlyn since the 1880s, used initially for over 60 years by Stanhope Forbes, father of the Newlyn School, and then by John Wells, one of the principal St Ives Modernists. Forbes and his wife Elizabeth set up the Newlyn School of Painting at Anchor which ran until 1940, attracting several students who went on to become distinguished artists, including Frances Hodgkins, Dod and Ernest Procter, and John Wells. Jim Ede, founder of Kettles Yard, also studied at the school.

The studio was built in 1888 with a single storey granite 'cottage' at the west end, and the east end with entirely glazed walls and roof. This allowed the studio to be used both as a backdrop 'set' for paintings of Newlyn cottages, as well as functioning as a 'sky' studio, allowing the artist to paint in natural light whatever the weather. Sometime before 1899 the glazed end of the studio was boarded over and a slate roof added, and the building became the Newlyn School of Painting.

Following the death of Stanhope Forbes in 1947, Anchor was sold by his widow to one of his former pupils, John Wells, who lived and worked at Anchor until his death in 2000.

Wells was an abstract painter and constructivist, who was friends with and influenced by Ben Nicholson and Naum Gabo. Despite living in Newlyn, he was one of several young modernist artists closely associated with artistic life in post-war St Ives. Anchor Studio was subsequently gifted to the charity which owned Porthmeor Studios in St Ives, which changed its name to the Borlase

Smart John Wells Trust to reflect this bequest.

When it first came into the Trust's possession in 2002, over a century of exposure to storms had left the timber structure and roof in a very fragile condition. Emergency repair works allowed the building to be brought back into use as a working studio in 2006, but it took another 12 years to raise the funds to carry out a full renovation. The restoration and repair were carried out with a light touch to retain the character of the building and evidence of its use by artists, and completed in March 2021. It has a new slate roof, damaged timbers and windows have been replaced and the building is now insulated, heated and well-lit, allowing it to be used as a live/work space for artists. The Trust will let Anchor to practising artists, as they do all their studios, their aim being to keep the great tradition of art in Newlyn strong by giving fresh opportunities to people who want to work here in Cornwall.



Studio North East End in March 2021 after renovation



North Elevation in May 2021 after renovation

ABBEY SLIP 100



This year marks the centenary of the creation of this iconic view of Penzance by 'the father of the Newlyn School', Stanhope Forbes.

The Inner Harbour – Abbey Slip is a classic example of the later work of Stanhope Forbes, being painted 'en plein air' on the spot at Abbey Slip in Penzance and combining meticulous recording of the built environment with highly accomplished painterly technique, brilliantly capturing the play of light on water. Although Penzance is only 1½ miles from Newlyn, the Newlyn School artists rarely painted the town, and this painting, together with Norman Garstin's *'The Rain it Raineth Every Day'* (also on display at Penlee House) are undoubtedly the two iconic views of Penzance.

Abbey Slip, as it is commonly known, was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1922 and was selected for inclusion in the landmark 'Painting in Newlyn' exhibition at the Barbican Art Gallery, London, in 1985.

The painting was purchased direct from the artist in 1921 by Miss F. Holman, whose family's engineering business was based in the buildings depicted. It was then purchased from the trustees of Miss Holman's estate in 1973 by a popular local man, who sold it to Penlee House Gallery & Museum in 2010 following a major fundraising campaign which included generous support from the Friends of Penlee House.

It has remained in Penzance since its initial purchase in 1921 and has now become a firm favourite with visitors to Penlee House both locally and nationally.

FRIENDS FUNDING FOR LITTLE PENLEE CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

We are delighted that the Friends have been able to double the number of sessions offered to Under 5s through our funding.

Penlee House will now offer fortnightly Baby & Parent sessions, held on alternate Mondays 10.00am – 11.30am. These sessions are intended to help babies and their carers explore colour, shapes and textures all within the gallery, surrounded by the beautiful Newlyn School paintings. The sessions are suitable from birth to crawlers.

Little Penlee pre-schooler sessions now take place on alternate Tuesdays from 1.00pm - 2.30pm. These sessions are aimed at toddlers to pre-schoolers and are a great opportunity for little ones to explore the galleries through songs, stories and activities.

Both sessions are free of charge for adults and children to attend and are led by early years specialists and supported by our outstanding volunteers. Please help Penlee House to spread the word about these brilliant fortnightly sessions, made possible by the Friends. Further details can be found on the Penlee House website.

Education & Outreach Officer Zoe Burkett says: "we are delighted to be able to offer these sessions on a regular basis, to provide a fun and interactive way for local families to engage with Penlee House. It's never too early to get children involved in what will hopefully become a lifelong love of museums and galleries."



UPCOMING SESSIONS

Baby & Parent: 20 September, 4 October, 18 October, 1 November & 15 November at 10.00am-11.30am

Preschoolers: 14 September, 28 September, 12 October, 26 October & 9 November at 1.00pm-2.30pm

EVENTS

Friends' Lecture Series

The Friends' Lecture Series is still paused for the time being, with the hope of being able to restart in the Spring. A further update will follow in the next Artefact.

ST IVES FESTIVAL



The St Ives Festival is back this year, and there are several interesting lectures and film screenings, do check their website:

www.stiveseptemberfestival.co.uk for further details and to book tickets.

Friends may be especially interested in these events, which complement the Penlee House collections and the Anchor Studio exhibition:

Monday 20 September – 2.30pm – 3.30pm at Porthmeor Studios

Talk: Anchor Studio as an Art School – The Forbes School of Painting 1899-1939 by Catherine Wallace

Stanhope Forbes began using his Newlyn Studio to run the Forbes School of Painting from 1899. In its 40 year existence over 200 artists went through its doors. This talk by Art Historian and author Catherine Wallace, looks at Forbes' work, as well as that of his fellow teachers and some of their many students over the 40 years. **£5.50**

Tuesday 21 September – 10.30am – 11.30am at Porthmeor Studios

Talk: My Friend John Wells by Dr Tim Rogers

In this talk, Dr Tim Rogers shares the memories of his close friend, John Wells. 'We were both doctors, loved the Scilly Islands and had a close affinity to Cornwall and its landscape. John was a unique and extraordinary artist whose work is both measured and spiritual. It presents a mystic quality that captures the complex elements of Cornwall'. **£5.50**

Thursday 23 September – 10.30am – 11.30am at Porthmeor Studios

Talk: Before Crysede: Newlyn and the women who helped create an international silk company by Janet Axten

In the middle of the nineteenth century the village of Newlyn appeared the least likely place in Cornwall to become the centre for Arts & Crafts. Historian, Janet Axten, examines the wide range of fascinating men and women who, together, put the once-remote community on the cultural map. **£5.50**

Thursday 23 September – 2.30pm – 3.30pm at Porthmeor Studios

Talk: What's in a crack? A closer look at the paintings of Stanhope Forbes RA and the Newlyn School Painters by Sarah Cove

Paintings conservator and art historian Sarah Cove ACR is well known for her re-discovery of 'lost' paintings by John Constable on BBC1's 'Fake or Fortune?' In this talk, she considers the materials and techniques used in oil sketches and exhibited works by Stanhope Forbes and his contemporaries in the light of technical examination undertaken during their recent cleaning and conservation. **£5.50**

Friday 24 September 10.30am – 11.30am at Porthmeor Studios

Talk: A stage set with panoramic views over Mounts Bay by Rolfe Kentish

Grade II* Anchor Studio, Newlyn, is one of the oldest artist's studios in the country, and architect Rolfe Kentish will describe the recent renovation project. The listed building was built in 1888 by Stanhope and Elizabeth Forbes, and then bought by John Wells in 1947, who left it to the Borlase Smart John Wells Trust in 2002. **£5.50**

Friday 24 September 4.30pm – 5.30pm Guided Tour: ANCHOR STUDIO, Trewarveneth Street, Newlyn TR18 5JJ, 4.30-5.30pm

Anchor Studio, the historic studio of Stanhope Forbes and John Wells set in the heart of Newlyn, has just undergone a major renovation. Join architect Rolfe Kentish at Anchor as he describes the story of its life as a studio and painting school, and its recent restoration. **£5.50**