



**MORE THAN  
A MUSE**



**NEW  
ACQUISITION**



**LAMORNA  
POTTERY**

# ARTEFACT

The Newsletter of the Friends of Penlee House

Volume 10/Issue 2 /April 2023

**LAMORNA COLONY PIONEERS  
03 MAY – 30 SEPTEMBER 2023**



Frank Gascoigne Heath - Summer Afternoon at Lamorna, oil on canvas. Private Collection.

This summer's exhibition celebrating artists working in Lamorna runs from 3 May until 30 September. Incorporating more than 60 paintings from public collections such as Tate and the Walker Art Gallery as well as from private collections, the exhibition, *Lamorna Colony Pioneers*, will be an overview of the colony from its founding just after the turn of the twentieth century, right through to the 1960s.

The art colony that formed in the Lamorna Valley, came into being several decades after those at Newlyn and St Ives, once the granite quarries that had operated there until the late 19th century had begun to close.

Elizabeth and Stanhope Forbes used the valley as inspiration both for themselves and for the students of their painting school in the early 20th century.

However, in the decade 1910-1920, the reputation of Lamorna as one of Cornwall's leading art colonies grew due to the presence of Samuel John 'Lamorna' Birch, Laura and Harold Knight, Dod Procter and Alfred Munnings, artists who all went on to become leading Royal Academicians.

Other pioneers from the inter-war years featured in the exhibition will include Frank Gascoigne Heath, Eleanor

and Robert Hughes, Stanley Gardiner and Charles Simpson. The exhibition will also include later avant-garde artists such as Hannah Gluckstein, known simply as 'Gluck', Marlow Moss, John Armstrong, John Tunnard and Ithell Colquhoun.

Katie Herbert, Curator/Deputy Director, said "This is the first time that Penlee House Gallery has staged an exhibition focussing on the artists of Lamorna as a whole and it is fascinating to explore how they inter-connect in terms of location and a shared sense of place rather than artistic style".

The exhibition has been co-curated with art historian, David Tovey, whose new books, a two-volume in-depth study of the colony, *Lamorna – An Artistic, Social, Literary History*, will be available during the show

the FRIENDS of  
**PENLEE HOUSE**  
 Gallery & Museum

ARTEFACT is published three times a year by and on behalf of the Friends of Penlee House. All correspondence should be directed to:

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## THE VARIOUS INCARNATIONS OF THE LAMORNA POTTERY



One lesser-known aspect of the Lamorna story that will feature in the Lamorna Colony Pioneers exhibition will be a display of Lamorna Pottery. There have been various incarnations of this.

The first Lamorna Pottery was set up in the early 1920s by Kate Westrup and Ella Naper, operating from a typical Lamorna corrugated iron studio close to Lamorna Veon. Kate, who demonstrated in both her life and art a love of animals, produced a series of small animal figurines, of which Penlee hold a typical example, Cow and Calf. Ella Naper produced some tableware, of which through the generosity of the late Maryella Pigott, Penlee has some examples, but perhaps is best known for her figurines of herself and her great friend, Laura Knight. Sadly, this first incarnation of the Pottery came to an end on the premature death of Kate Westrup in 1928.

The second incarnation of the Lamorna Pottery was established in 1947 by Christopher James Ludlow and Derrick Wilshaw in what had been the Trewoofe Creamery for the Catchall Dairy. This Pottery is still operating from its original site, last year celebrating its 75th Anniversary. It was run by Chris Ludlow until his death in 1969, by Peter and Shirley Brown from 1971-1988, by Ossie Rego from 1988 to 2018 and by Jeremy Chapman and Munir since then.

Whilst the Browns ran a hugely successful pottery using slip casting with a range of principally blue and brown glazes, sometimes with some nice abstract effects, the heyday of the Pottery from an artistic viewpoint are the Ludlow years, for he was recognised at the time as a pottery decorator of exceptional talent. Indeed, in his day, his decorative skills were felt to be superior to Bernard Leach

and his Lamorna pots were so prized that he was unable to keep up with demand, leading to mental health issues for he was not a businessman.

There will be a number of examples of his exquisite pots, drawn from both the collections of Penlee and art historian, David Tovey, in the show. There will also be some examples from Penlee's collection of the work of George and Margaret Smith, who helped at the Lamorna Pottery in 1964-5 before setting up the Tregurnow Pottery, which they ran successfully until 1999.



## TEST YOUR CONNOISSEURSHIP

Going forwards we will be testing the connoisseurial skills of our readers by presenting details of works from Penlee's collection. Can you guess the artist and title of this painting?

The answer is at the end of the newsletter.



## MORE THAN A MUSE



When we hear the name Eileen Mayo many of us think of Dod Procter's serene portrait painted c. 1926-30 and currently on loan to Penlee. Shown in a relaxed pose and glancing away from the viewer, Mayo is painted with great sensitivity, indicative of a close bond between the artist and sitter.

As well as modelling for Procter, Mayo, who herself had studied at the Slade School of Fine Art and the Central School of Arts and Crafts, also sat for Laura Knight, Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell, and Edith Lawrence and spent summers in Cornwall from 1926 to 1930. However, Mayo was more than just a muse to famous artists and used the opportunity of modelling to further her own ambitions as an artist: 'All the time I have been posing for painters I have been studying their methods and listening to their talk... I have learned more than I ever learned in an art school'.

Mayo went on to forge a long and successful career as a multi-talented artist working in England in the 1930s and 1940s before moving to Australia and then New Zealand. Inspired by the natural world, she was a painter, tapestry designer, engraver, and illustrator and was made a Dame Commander of the British Empire just prior to her death in 1994.

Her extraordinary career was recently the subject of a major exhibition at Towner Eastbourne (Eileen Mayo: A Natural History, 12 February – July 2022) in which the Penlee portrait played a central role in the narrative of her early life. A book on her life and work by Sara Cooper was published by Eiderdown Books in February 2021.

## BEQUESTS

We've received several substantial bequests, most recently a very generous bequest from the late Carlene Edith Harry. From West Penwith, she was keenly interested in local history and culture and divided her estate between seven local charities. One bequest to the Cornwall Heritage Trust enabled them to purchase the Bronze Age hill fort Caer Bran and you can see a portrait of her on the Trust's website. We are so grateful to Miss Harry and to other donors.

Our next issue will include an article about how you can make provisions to support Penlee House.

## NEW ACQUISITION



## SHARE YOUR SKILLS TO SUPPORT THE FRIENDS

The Committee is keen to harness the skills of Friends to support our work and here are some ways in which you can help.

### Could you be a Committee Member?

There will be vacancies on the Committee following the AGM. If you are interested, please contact Judith Summers, Secretary to the Friends: [judithmarybosavern@gmail.com](mailto:judithmarybosavern@gmail.com). We will start with arranging an informal conversation so you can find out more and will send you details of our recently agreed procedure for appointing new Committee members.

### We need your digital expertise

We are urgently looking for members with knowledge of social media, websites and digital broadcasting skills to join the Committee or help with specific projects. Please contact the Secretary.

### Calling First-Aiders

We sometimes need a First-Aider to be on duty, for example at the AGM. If you are a qualified First Aider and would be willing to help out occasionally, please let the Secretary know.

## FRIENDS ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

A small working group has been set up to look at attracting new members and providing more events for members in addition to the regular lectures. We hope to organise such things as visits to artists' studios, gardens and raffles, and would welcome other suggestions.

Contact Caroline White: [carowhite@msn.com](mailto:carowhite@msn.com)

## STAFFING UPDATES

The Director, Anna, has returned from maternity leave and so Katie has resumed her role as Deputy Director/Curator. Sadly this means that Michael's contract to cover the curator post has ended and he left us at the end of March.

Having completed her Level 3 apprenticeship in February 2021, the Marketing Executive Apprentice, Maisy-Sky, has now completed her Level 4 apprenticeship and we would like to offer our congratulations to her. Unfortunately, this means that her contract has also come to an end.

We would like to thank Michael and Maisy-Sky for everything they have done for both the Gallery and for the Friends and wish them every success with their future endeavours.

## OUR NEW WEBSITE

The Friends' website is now up and running. It will include details of events and articles of interest, and will be steadily developed over the coming months. Visit <https://friendsofpenlee.org.uk>

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Lectures take place at 7.30 p.m. at Penlee House (unless otherwise stated). Booking is essential. Please telephone 01736 363625**

Admission: Members £3.00 Non-members £4.00

### 2023

Monday 24 April

Michael Johnson, Principal Craftsman, Newlyn Copperworks.

#### **Newlyn Copper**

Monday 22 May

Janet Axten, Social Historian.

#### **Fast, Smart and Outrageous: Art School Fashion in Laura Knight's Paintings**

Wednesday 14 June

#### **AGM at 7.00pm**

Zennor Building Lecture Theatre, Truro & Penwith College, St Clare, Penzance, TR18 2SA

Followed by a lecture: David Tovey, Art Historian

#### **Lamorna Colony Pioneers**

No booking required. No admission charge.

## WHAT'S ON

**Guided Tours: Lamorna Colony Pioneers with David Tovey, Art Historian**

Tuesday 16 May – 11am and 2.30pm

Thursday 24 August – 11am and 2.30pm

The tours are included in the admission price to the Gallery and last between 30 and 45 minutes.

**No booking required.**

**Study Days: Catherine Wallace, Art Historian. A Peaceful Haven: Artists of The Lamorna Valley.**

Thursday 25 May - 10.30-3.00pm, Truro Library.

Tuesday 4 July – 10.30 - 3.00pm, The Centre, Newlyn Trinity Methodist Church. All study days priced £35.00.

Visit [www.cathwallace.co.uk](http://www.cathwallace.co.uk) for more details.