



**NEW  
ACQUISITION**



**TEST YOUR  
ART  
KNOWLEDGE**



**2023/24  
LECTURES**

# ARTeFACT

The Newsletter of the Friends of Penlee House

Volume 10/Issue 3 /September 2023

**A PASSION FOR CORNISH ART: 50 YEARS OF PRIVATE COLLECTING  
11 OCTOBER 2023 – 13 JANUARY 2024**



*John Anthony Park, Seawards, Penberth, oil on canvas. © The Artist's Estate. Private Collection.*

Our autumn show focuses on private collectors and the important role they play in helping to form exhibitions. A *Passion for Cornish Art* showcases part of the collection of John and the late Pep Branfield, who, over the past 50 years, have amassed over 150 paintings and ceramics by artists and potters working in Cornwall.

Initially collecting paintings by Newlyn School artists such as Stanhope Forbes, Charles Simpson and Thomas Cooper Gotch, the Branfields' interest then moved on to St Ives artists including Robert Borlase Smart, John Anthony Park, and works by St Ives Modernists such as

John Wells, Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, Terry Frost and Bryan Wynter. In later years, paintings by Roger Hilton, Rose Hilton and Paul Feiler were added to the collection. Throughout this period, the Branfields continued to collect the work of artist friend Tony Giles and, in fact, the very first and very last paintings acquired were by him.

For over twenty-five years, Penlee House have been borrowing works from private collectors such as the Branfields for inclusion in our exhibitions, and regular visitors to the Gallery will recognise many of the paintings in this show. As well as being the last chance to see these paintings

together as a curated collection, this exhibition aims to highlight the important relationship that Penlee House Gallery & Museum has with private collectors in order to stage interesting and relevant exhibitions celebrating the wealth of artistic talent in Cornwall, and help make previously unseen paintings more accessible to the wider public.

This exhibition is sponsored by Lay's Auctioneers. The Branfield Collection will be offered at auction in February 2024 by Lay's Auctioneers.

Katie Herbert, Curator/Deputy Director, said "We are so grateful to John and Pip for loaning so many of their incredible pieces over the years. This exhibition is a fantastic opportunity to see their collection all together for one last time".

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:

Penlee House Gallery & Museum,  
Morrab Road, Penzance TR18 4HE

Tel 01736 363625

email: [info@penleehouse.org.uk](mailto:info@penleehouse.org.uk)  
[www.friendsofpenleehouse.org.uk](http://www.friendsofpenleehouse.org.uk)

## LATEST ACQUISITIONS



The latest acquisition to Penlee's collection comes courtesy of long-time benefactor, George Bednar. This 1908 painting by Lamorna Birch is the fifty-second item given by George since his first donation of a drypoint engraving by Elizabeth Forbes (the first of many) back in 1995.

*Artists Painting in the Lamorna Woods*, which was included in the recent *Lamorna Colony Pioneers* exhibition, features Birch's wife and eldest daughter, Houghton and Mornie, sitting with their dog, whilst being painted by two artists believed to be Harold and Laura Knight. For those of you who visited the summer exhibition, you will have seen the Laura Knight portrait of Mornie, wearing the same outfit and holding a doll. A small painting by Harold Knight, once belonging to Mornie and sold at auction in 1999, depicts her in the same attire, also holding the doll.

It is a beautiful addition to the collections and we are very grateful to George for all his generous support over the years.

The Friends Committee have been busy purchasing items for Penlee's collections this year. In the Spring, we acquired a watercolour by William Wainwright entitled *Mental Arithmetic*, depicting an old sea dog in a sail loft counting coins. Wainwright first visited Newlyn in 1881, following in fellow Birmingham artist Walter Langley's footsteps. He returned in 1883, staying in the village for two years, therefore dating this painting to the early 1880s. It will go on display early next year, once it has undergone conservation treatment.

As well as paintings, the Friends have also acquired two pieces of studio pottery by renowned potter William Marshall.

The first, a lidded ginger jar, was purchased by the Committee and the second, a bottle vase with tenmoku glaze was donated by the vendor. Both will be on display in the autumn exhibition.

## GIFTS IN WILLS

By leaving the Friends a gift in your Will you will enable us to help Penlee pursue new and exciting opportunities and to help secure it for future generations.

A message from our Vice President, Lawrence Hendra: "Penlee House is one of Cornwall's pre-eminent picture galleries and works tirelessly to promote the art produced in this vibrant area over the last three hundred years. It is therefore essential that we strive to help and support Penlee however we can so that they can continue to keep, collect, and display works of art and artefacts for the public to enjoy."

### How will we use your gift?

Below is a brief list of ways in which your gift could help the Friends support Penlee House Gallery & Museum:

- Contributions towards acquisitions. The museum is always looking to acquire new works to bolster its collection of pictures and artefacts to provide strong examples of the art produced in west Cornwall.
- Assistance with conservation costs. The museum's extensive collection requires constant care and upkeep so that it is preserved for future generations.
- Help with educational outreach. The museum has a strong track-record of innovative education programmes that reach new audiences.
- Funding special projects. Every so often the Gallery undertakes major redevelopment projects in order to ensure its facilities are up to date and in line with what the museum visitor of today expects. These projects require substantial support.

### What type of gift can you leave?

There are several types of gifts that you can leave us in your Will. Your solicitor will be able to talk you through the options.

Visit the Friends of Penlee House website for more info and to get in touch.



## **MASTER PLAN AND FORWARD PLAN ANNA RENTON, DIRECTOR**

Penzance Council is developing a Masterplan for Penlee House to create a more sustainable organisation, so we can continue to preserve the artefacts in our collection and inspire generations to come.

### **Our priorities are to:**

- Reduce the environmental impact of the building
- Increase revenue generation through improved catering and retail facilities
- Improve visitor facilities (e.g. toilets)
- Increase gallery space to display collections
- Create a new fit-for-purpose learning centre
- Increase storage capacity for collections.

### **Towards achieving this, we are undertaking the following work in the next six months:**

1. Applying for funding to enable the café to move to the Coach House. If successful, the released space in the former café will be repurposed for retail space. Together, this project will generate more income for the café and provide commercial opportunities for local artists.

2. Commissioning specialist engineering reports to understand how to lower our energy usage, especially regarding our ageing air conditioning plant.

The Forward Plan is under development and will need to identify funding sources for each stage of the Masterplan.

If you are interested in making a donation to support any part of the Masterplan, please get in touch: [arenton@penleehouse.org.uk](mailto:arenton@penleehouse.org.uk)

## **CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION STATUS AND THE FRIENDS**

The Friends of Penlee House is registered as an unincorporated charity which means it is not a legal entity in its own right. This has not hindered our work in the past but it has become increasingly clear over recent months that it will not enable the Friends to provide the support which Penlee House will require going forward.

An ambitious new masterplan to ensure the future success and sustainability of Penlee House is being developed by the Town Council working in partnership with the Friends.

To ensure that we are able to effectively support Penlee House in the implementation of this plan the Trustees and the Committee of the Friends are proposing that the Friends become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation or CIO. This would allow us to enter into contracts, make funding bids in our own right, employ staff and own property. Many other museums and Friends organisations have taken this path already.

Becoming a CIO would not change the character of the Friends as a membership-led organisation with elected trustees.

You will receive more information about this proposal over the coming months. The decision about the Friends becoming a CIO will be taken at the AGM in June 2024.

We welcome enquiries – please contact the Secretary [judithmarysummers@gmail.com](mailto:judithmarysummers@gmail.com)

## **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.



## GET TO KNOW OUR NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### Sue Wilthew - Chair

My passion for museums began with a children's club at my local museum and as a teenager I joined their Friends, volunteering on everything. I became a scientist with the Conservation Research Laboratory, British Museum and Head of Conservation Services, Scottish Museums Council. Moving into international events management and charity sector executive positions led to chief executive roles in local government and private sector consultancy. In retirement I feel I've come full circle bringing that same passion with me to the Friends.

### Peter Maynard – Treasurer

My business career was in retail, followed by a role in residential lettings when we moved to Penzance in 2009. I retired in 2022. I am currently Chair of Penzance Choral Society and sing in several choirs. I also volunteer at CTIPA Foodbank and at Penlee Park Open Air Theatre. I am Treasurer of Duchy Singers and of Penzance Bowls Club and am excited about the additional challenges that being Treasurer of the Friends will bring.

### Ruth Towse – Committee

A lifelong academic, I have worked in universities in the UK and abroad, specialising in cultural economics and economics of copyright, now at Bournemouth University as Professor of Economics of Creative Industries. Interest in archaeology first brought me to West Cornwall in the 1970s and I visited Penzance frequently, for which Penlee House was always part of the attraction. I moved to Penzance in 2021.

## VOLUNTEER AT PENLEE HOUSE

Penlee House is always keen to hear from friends who are interested in volunteering. There are vacancies for room stewards, and from time to time behind the scenes roles. Work can be arranged to suit your convenience. You will be joining a welcoming volunteer community with plenty of support.

Contact David: [dtrevivian@penleehouse.org.uk](mailto:dtrevivian@penleehouse.org.uk) or on 01736 363625.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday 20 September at 7.30pm  
David Tovey, Cornish Art Historian  
**St Ives – The Dawn of a Colony**

Exhibition Private View  
Wednesday 11 October at 6.30pm  
**A Passion for Cornish Art: 50 Years of Private Collecting**

Lecture  
Wednesday 15 November at 7.30pm  
Sarah Cove ACR, Painting Conservator  
**What's in a Crack?**

Event  
Wednesday 6 December at 5.30pm  
At Penlee House Gallery & Museum  
**Friends Christmas Shopping Event**

Exhibition Private View  
Friday 26 January at 6.30pm  
**A Journey Through West Cornwall and The Cornish Paintings of Martina Thomas**

Lecture  
Wednesday 21 February at 7.30pm  
Michael Johnson, Principal Craftsman  
**Newlyn Copper**

Event  
Wednesday 20 March at TBC  
**Valuation Evening with Barbara Kirk at the Queen's Hotel, Penzance.**

Lecture  
Wednesday 17 April at 7.30pm  
Casey Meyer-Bourne, Cornwall Heritage Trust  
**An Archaeology Evening**

Exhibition Private View  
Wednesday 22 May at 6.30pm  
**The Exceptional Harold Harvey**

Wednesday 26 June  
**AGM at TBC**  
**Followed by a lecture: Lawrence Hendra**  
**No booking required. No admission charge.**

**Lectures take place at Penlee House (unless otherwise stated). Booking is essential.**

**Please telephone 01736 363625**

Admission: Members £5 Non-members £10