

PAF NEWS

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

Charles Summers

Charles Summers has lived and worked in Cornwall for many years. He is a self-taught painter and is fascinated by the natural world. The trees on Bodmin Moor have a special attraction and feature in all of his works now hanging in the gallery. "These trees are wonderfully resilient," says Charles, "surviving all that the often violent weather throws at them over the centuries."

The technique that Charles has used for each of these pictures is 'oil on board', which involves painting on wood that has been sanded and sealed with a special primer.



Woodland



Thorn tree, yellow grass

Collage is Charles' main current interest. "The process of building layers of paint and paper, sanding down and yet more overpainting seems to be something of a way of describing life, birth, death and renewal," he says.

Another interest is fan making. In 2012, as a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Fan Makers, Charles was commissioned to make a Diamond Jubilee fan for Her Majesty The Queen. We have some beautiful examples in the gallery.

Babs Taylor



Towards the Bay

Polperro, where at the highest point a huge vista opens up. With the 'Sea at St Just' I have tried to represent part of the infinite range of blues and greys that I have gradually become familiar with. The 'Smily House' is a fun view of an entirely imaginary village above a beach, perhaps every child's dream home."



Smily house

Babs Taylor originally trained in textile design and started her career designing children's clothes. After moving to Cornwall in 2005 she has developed an artistic style based on acrylic inks and pastels to produce a range of smaller sizes of art works for display in more compact spaces.

Babs is currently exploring an abstract approach based on the natural landscapes and seascapes of the Cornish countryside. "My art is inspired by the timeless textures, patterns and subtly changing colours of the Cornish coast," she says. "Wild moors, dark hills and deep lakes create unsettling moods. I like to capture images over the seasons that bring wild and beautiful weather which inspires so many artists. I love the ever-changing shapes and forms of the mysterious and ancient county of Kernow."

"The inspiration for 'Towards the Bay' came from a field above Lantic Bay, a few miles west of



Sea at St Just

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 tells us about the paintings from Polperro that featured in the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1885:

"Prior to 1885, the appearance of a Polperro subject at the Royal Academy was very rare. Joseph Farington, known for his early engravings of the village, had had one hung in 1812, but the next one that we know of was by an Irish artist, Francis Sylvester Walker, in 1879. Neither has surfaced as yet. However in 1885 there were at least four paintings of Polperro in that year's RA show, and three of these will be included in next spring's exhibition at Falmouth Art Gallery.

The best-regarded work was an oil by William Borrow, a Hastings artist who worked in Cornwall a lot in the early 1880s. It shows the view from the coast path from Talland Bay as daylight fades. Some fishing boats are plying their trade along the coast, and chimneys in the village show that fires have been lit. One reviewer felt that it was the best Cornish painting in the show, which means that he considered it surpassed Stanhope Forbes' *Fish Sale on a Cornish Beach*! We would probably not go that far now, but it is a very atmospheric piece.



William Borrow



John McDougal

A very different painting was a watercolour by Liverpool artist, John McDougal, which depicts Harbour End, with 'The Smuggler's Cottage' (rather enlarged) as a foreground on the left and, of course, it shows the scene before the construction of the Fish Quay in 1911. It is a grey day - and depictions of grey days were fashionable at the time, due to the problems of *plein air* painting in sunshine, when colours and shadows constantly changed as the sun moved round. The tide is out and Mallard and Aylesbury ducks wander on the sands, whilst a girl, sitting on the wall in front of the cottage, chats to a lad in a boat, who appears to have

been working on mending wicker crab pots. The backdrop includes not only, on the far right, a view of the 'Roman Bridge', with the property now known as 'The House on the Props' behind it, but also, with the eye of the spectator guided by the bows of the two boats, the vista up Lansallos Street, with the distinctive porches of 'The Jew's House' and the property now known as 'The Captain's Cabin'. It is accordingly of considerable topographical interest.

The other two paintings featuring Polperro subjects were by Charles Boutwood, albeit their titles did not indicate the location of the subject. One, entitled *A Quay-pool, Cornwall*, was a narrow, elongated horizontal piece, featuring the harbour at low tide, with children, accompanied by their mothers, investigating the pools of water left by the receding tide and digging in the sand. The other painting prompted an amused reaction. '*A Cornish Garden*, by Charles E. Boutwood, is almost humorous, in that

the scene is the very mockery of all that is conveyed to the imagination by the suggestion of garden. It is a growth of the very homeliest of cabbage in the midst of a sordid and unlovely scene of broken fence and squalor. The garden was found, no doubt, in the further regions of Cornwall, where the fertility is of a hard sort, and where the poor man's cottage is not usually set in the midst of flowers and rustic beauty. The picture is well done.' This work has been retained by the artist's family and so will be in the exhibition.



Charles Boutwood

Of course, Boutwood, and his art school friend, Herbert Butler, whilst staying at 'Kayne Cottage', Talland Hill on this 1884 visit, became attracted to two of the daughters of their landlord, Captain John Pond, and so returned with regularity for the rest of the decade. A story for next time."

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. And concerning that exhibition, there is good news on the restoration of the **Loudan** painting which we have reported on in previous PAF newsletters. The painting is now in the hands of the conservator and all being well it should be ready to serve as a centrepiece for the exhibition in Falmouth. More information is available on David Tovey's website [here](#).

News from the gallery

In our previous issue we said we were in the process of moving from the Foresters Hall gallery beside the inner harbour to the Village Hall at Crumplehorn. This move is now complete as the photograph below shows. Many people helped us and special thanks are due to the Village Hall Management Committee, especially Jude Greville and Tina Winterson, for smoothing the way for us. The room now looks great and we have had many appreciative comments from our visitors. Unfortunately our plan to replace the strip lights with proper gallery-style lighting has been delayed so we will have to wait for the next newsletter to show a final, complete picture. We re-opened on Saturday 26th September and so far there has been a promising increase in footfall compared to what we would have expected at this time of year in the Foresters Hall. Sadly from 5th November we will have to close again under the new lock-down, expecting to re-open early in December when we hope many of you will be able to visit us.



Aside from our move we have updated the **Charter** which sets out the objectives of the Foundation and the rules within which we work. Among other changes we have clarified various categories of membership including the roles of 'Friends of the Foundation' and volunteer members. The Charter is available on our website (see below) and if you would like to join us in any of the membership categories please get in touch through any of our members or through our email address, below.

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. We have arranged and been involved in many art and musical events and activities as shown on our website at the link below. Let us know if we can help you or a group that you are a part of within the framework of our mission.

Our Team

Currently we have eight exhibiting members all of whom live and work locally: **Barbara Ellis**, artist; **Sandy Horton**, glass; **Paul Lightfoot**, photographer, writer; **Sue Lord**, artist; **Charles Summers**, artist and fan-maker; **Babs Taylor**, artist; **Tracy Watts**, graphic designer and illustrator; and **Lisa Woollett**, author and photographer. **Jacky Humby** is our secretary.

What we offer

- We **exhibit** an extensive, evolving collection of local art works in our gallery in the Polperro village hall.
- We arrange and host occasional **events** for the benefit of local residents and visitors.
- We circulate this free **newsletter** six times each year; email us at the address below to suggest others who might like a copy.
- 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. Please click [here](#) to make a donation through [PayPal](#), visit our website at the link below for other options or let us know if you would like to join us as an artist, Friend or volunteer. Thank you for any help you can give!

Contact us

You will always be welcome to drop into the gallery, or contact us by email or through our website:
Email: polperroarts@gmail.com Website: www.polperroarts.org

