

May 2022

Royal Cornwall Museum Newsletter



rcm
royal cornwall museum

Note from the Directors

Dear Member,

I hope this latest newsletter finds you all well. We have been really busy at the museum and are now focused on a summer marketing campaign promoting the exhibitions, activities and events programme running throughout the season. We want to appeal to the widest and most diverse audience to ensure we can grow visitor numbers. We have some exciting new exhibitions and hope to see you all in the museum over the summer period.

We have already received some fantastic news in 2022. Firstly, we were proud to be awarded the Spirit of the Awards at this year's Cornwall Heritage Awards. It is so pleasing to see the team's hard work being recognised in the sector. Secondly, the Museums Town Deal Business Case has been submitted and £476k has been secured to develop the mineral gallery. This project is part of a much bigger plan which will focus on a sustainable future for the RIC. We look forward to sharing this at the 2022 AGM.

During the last twelve months we have reflected and reviewed the RIC's vision, strategic priorities and long-term sustainability. As part of the process, we have been reviewing the staffing structure to ensure we are in the best possible place to achieve our ambitions. Effective leadership is key to achieving our aims. We are really pleased to confirm that from 1 April 2022 the RIC has moved to a dual leadership model. Bryony, as Artistic Director and Jonathan, as Executive Director, taking joint responsibility for the leadership of the RIC. This is an important step forward in delivering the five-year plan whilst putting our values of equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of decision making.

After 16 years Oliver Padel has decided it is the right time to hand on the editorial baton of the RIC journal. We can all agree that Oliver's commitment and adept stewardship has seen the journal go from strength to strength. We are now looking for a volunteer who is interested in taking on this important role. Oliver will be very happy to carry out a handover to support the new RIC journal editor. We are also looking for new members for the Publications Committee. The committee is responsible for overseeing the production of the journal and helps manage the RIC prizes. If either of these opportunities appeal, please email or call myself or Bryony. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Oliver for his commitment, due diligence, attention to detail and above all, his patience in overseeing 17 editions of the RIC journal. It has been a great pleasure working with him.

In June we will be recruiting new Trustees to join the RIC board. As we head into a new era for the organisation, we are looking for new skills to compliment the exiting board members. If you are interested in this opportunity, please keep a look out on the website for an application pack.

As ever your support and commitment to the RIC is very much valued. We continue to work in a financially challenging environment which makes your contribution even more valued. As I write this Cornwall Council are making decisions about their grant funding for cultural organisations. They have indicated that their budget has been cut, and that they want to prioritise different things. This grant has been essential in supporting the RIC in the past. We believe the RIC is uniquely placed to support the Council's aim to promote Cornish Identity and high-quality cultural offer, however it is possible we might be facing a considerable grant reduction. If this is the case we will have to make some difficult decisions about the way we operate.

Last year we received some significant legacies which made a huge difference to the 2021/22 finances. Legacies and donations of any size make a big difference, particularly at a time where grant funding is in decline. We have included legacy details in this newsletter, please have a read and share with friends and family. We are here if you have any questions. We would also like to grow the membership and we appreciate you recommending the RIC to everyone you meet. Your advocacy makes such a positive contribution to the RIC.

Thank you.

Jonathan and Bryony

email: jonathan.morton@royalcornwallmuseum.org.uk or bryony.robins@royalcornwallmuseum.org.uk
call: 01872 2727205

Programme Update

Earlier this year we were delighted that our community focused work was recognised by winning the Cornwall Heritage Awards Spirit of the Awards and Highly Commended in two other categories. The Awards are supported by South West Museum Development and Cornwall Museums Partnership.



Amy Shakespeare, Communications and Interpretation Manager (left) and Bryony Robins, Artistic Director at the Cornwall Heritage Awards

After a very busy Easter with egg hunts and survival workshops, we have an exciting year ahead of exhibitions and activities at the museum. The exhibition ***Pulling the Thread*** is now open in the Spotlight Gallery. In 2021 Valerie Spierling kindly donated an unusual quilt. Made by Rose Caroline Lady Graves Sawle (1818-1914) from scraps of fine dresses, the pattern follows the English paper-piecing technique. Wondering about the origin of the very fine 'scraps', we were amazed when on closer examination they revealed something even more interesting. Many still have their paper templates, which appear to be old letters and household lists, and give a tantalising glimpse into her everyday life. This sparked the interest of Amanda Allen, Front of House Officer and a keen textile artist herself. A chance discovery in the Courtney Library of a book about Lady Graves-Sawle's life led to discoveries we would never have predicted. This pioneering Victorian was an early adopter of photography, and unusually for a woman at the time, she travelled extensively. After further research Amanda managed to locate the detailed diaries she kept of her experiences and the illustrious people she met, including Queen Victoria and Charles Dickens. These diaries have kindly been lent to the museum by John Smith who saved them when Penrice House was sold. This exhibition provides a glimpse into the life of this unconventional and fascinating woman.



In contrast, we have an exhibition of contemporary quilts on display in the Art Gallery. ***Threads of Survival*** is a powerful collection of embroidered quilts made collectively by communities across Britain detailing pandemic life. Each embroidery piece is made by a different person as a message of support for the NHS or an expression of their feelings in lockdown. The end results are vibrant and moving. The exhibition is curated by Steve Carne. To create a quilt for Cornwall we have started our own embroidery group I Sew We Grow which meets on Wednesday mornings 11-1 pm. Just drop in, everyone welcome.

Our major summer show is of works by landscape artist Andrew Barrowman. The exhibition is a record of his travels on foot exploring hidden places along the Fal river from Falmouth to Truro. Andrew paints in oils, watercolour and sketches mainly en plein air, sometimes finishing his work back in his studio at Krowji, Redruth. Last year Andrew won the Bowyer Drawing Prize at the New English Art Club and Highly Commended at the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists exhibition. He also teaches at St Ives School of Painting.

A Gathering Light: A Bronze Age Golden Sun is an exhibition co-curated by the British Museum and RCM, led by Jeni Woolcock, Collections Engagement Manager. This show will highlight the most significant Bronze Age gold metalwork, including the impressive Shropshire sun pendant alongside Cornish Bronze Age artefacts. The exhibition will explore how the solar system was a key element of mythology and belief in the Bronze Age, which lasted from around 2150-800 BC in Britain. The pendant shows a rare depiction of the sun, celebrating its life-giving power and revealing the importance of the sun in people's belief systems and their lives. The pendant was discovered in the Shropshire marshes in 2018, having been intentionally deposited there 3,000 years ago. It is now going on display for only the second time following a British Museum show at Shropshire Museum.

We have many more exhibitions and activities over the summer and do hope you can join us. A private view for Members will be held on 22 July, details will follow, but please save the date.

Bryony Robins, Artistic Director

What's on

Exhibition Dates

Pulling the Thread

10 May – 23 July

Exploring the life, travels and memories of Lady Graves Sawle a pioneering and unconventional Victorian. *Image right: Lady Graves Sawle's unusual quilt.*



Threads of Survival

31 May – 2 July

Quilts and textile art reflecting pandemic life and the importance of maintaining a public healthcare for all.



Cornwall College

11 July – 3 September

Work by graduating students of the BA(Hons) & Foundation Degree Art & Design Practice programmes at Cornwall College; ceramics, painting & textiles that is in part a response to the museum collection.

Into the Carrick Roads – exploring hidden Cornwall

23 July – 23 December

A visual journey along the river from Falmouth to Truro by award winning Cornish-based artist Andrew Barrowman, capturing the changing light and landscapes on his travels. *Image left: View across Carrick Roads.*

A Gathering Light

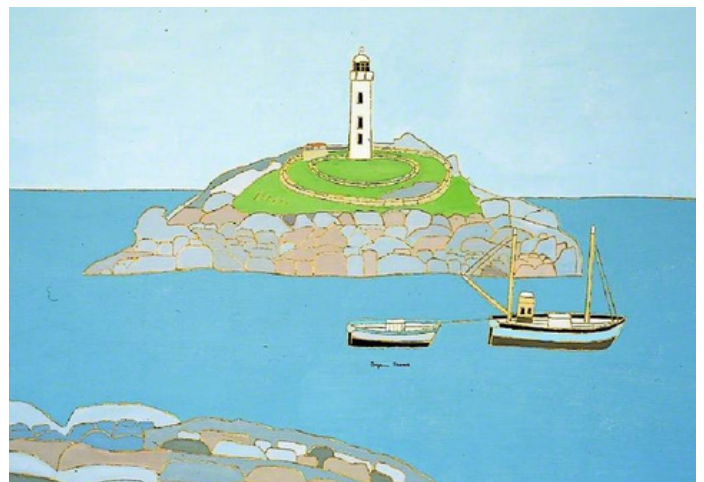
2 August - 5 November

Bronze Age Gold from the collection of the British Museum and Royal Institution of Cornwall.

A Different View

13 September onwards

Bryan Pearce's life and work in a retrospective that explores his unique eye within the context of the Modernist art movement that emerged in Cornwall in the middle of the last century. *Image right: work by Bryan Pearce.*



What's on

Pulling the Threads of Survival: In Conversation

Thursday 30 June, 18.00h, Members tickets £5

An evening in conversation with John Smith and Amanda Allan, researchers behind our *Pulling the Thread* exhibition, and Steve Carne the curator and coordinator of *Threads of Survival* project and exhibition.

Find out more here: www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/royal-cornwall-museum-9238456659

To book at the Members price, please contact Lauren Campbell on lauren.campbell@royalcornwallmuseum.org.uk or 01872 272205

Save the date!

Private View: A Gathering Light

Friday 22 July, evening

Join us to celebrate the opening of our new summer exhibition of Bronze Age Gold and meet the curators. This will be an evening event.



I SEW WE GROW

Drop in sewing club

Add to our Cornwall NHS quilt or
bring your own project

Create a square as a response to pandemic
life and people's love for the NHS. Add it
to our quilt to be exhibited in the museum
alongside others made across England.

More info:
lauren.campbell@royalcornwallmuseum.org.uk
01872 272205

Wednesdays 11am - 1pm April - July 2022
Royal Cornwall Museum

Free drop in with a £5 annual pass
Bring your own threads (or borrow ours)
Basic sewing skills required

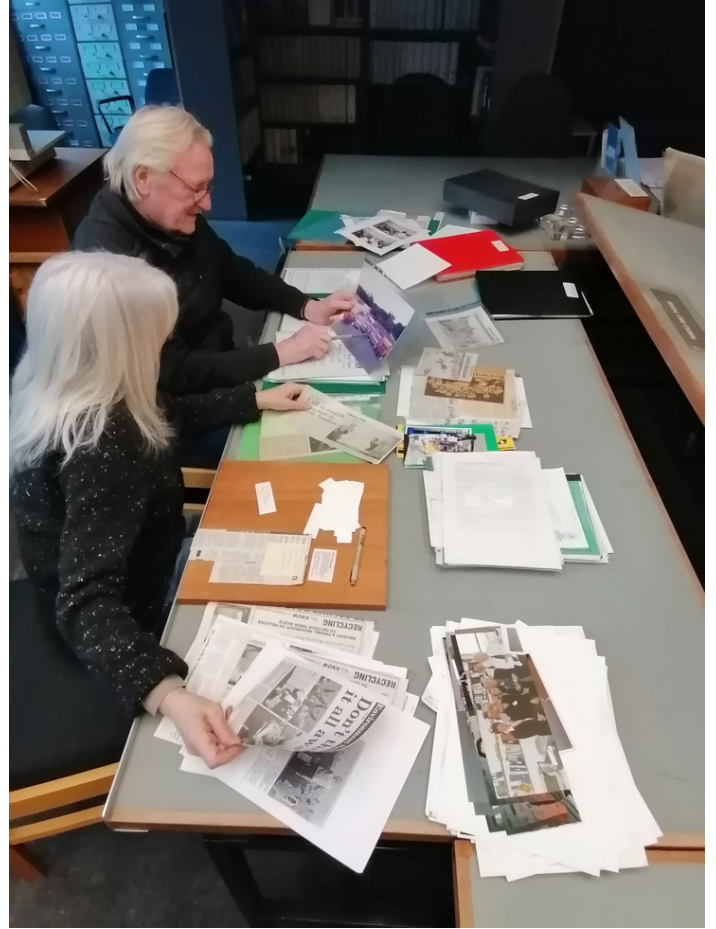
Royal Cornwall Museum 

From the Library

Recycling in Cornwall - Collecting in the Current Climate

'We are concerned about the climate crisis and are committed to addressing our carbon footprint. We will reduce the amount of non-recyclable waste we generate...[and] we will reduce the environmental impact of all our activities and challenge ourselves to be carbon-neutral by 2030.'

This statement, written into the RIC's Strategic Plan 2021-2026, therefore has relevance for one of the Courtney Library's recent accessions which concerns consumer waste issues. This collection 'Recycling in Cornwall' was formed by Richard Bower, formerly the County's Recycling Education Officer. The files consist of newspaper cuttings, photographs and other miscellaneous items about a variety of environmental-related activities - paper mountains, bottle banks, the Cornwall Fly-tip Scheme and Anti-litter campaigns - which took place c.1982-2006 in the mid-Cornwall area. It is a record of contemporary community engagement and education to raise awareness of the environment and how, as consumers, the way that we all live our lives impacts on the future of the planet.



Grant Application Success - Book Conservation Training

It is extremely welcome news that our team of Arts Society volunteers (NADFAS) based in the Courtney Library have been successful with their grant application for book conservation training this year.

It is a requirement of the national body of the Arts Society that volunteers undergo periodic training led by a relevant qualified person. The first of three training sessions booked for 2022 took place in the library via Zoom at the end of May with freelance library conservator Caroline Bendix. Caroline works for various national conservation bodies including the National Trust. The meticulous nature of book repair work requires great skill and patience. The level of excellence that the Courtney Library team has achieved over many years is a great asset to us and we extend our heartfelt thanks to them for their continuing support.

Angela Broome
Librarian & Archivist

From our Friends!

The RIC is a corporate member of CALH (the **Cornwall Association of Local Historians**) (with thanks to Angela Broome in the Courtney Library). CALH is happy to invite members of the RIC to attend CALH conferences, held each year in the Spring and Autumn.

The theme of this year's Autumn Conference, to be held in Newquay on **Saturday 15 October 2022**, is to be 'plague and pestilence'. Topics may range from covid to the black death. Details have yet to be fixed, but there will be a full day of expert speakers and the option of a pre-booked lunch.

The Spring Conference and AGM is a two day event in Newquay with lunch on both days and the possibility of overnight accommodation available at our chosen hotel. The CALH Spring Conference and AGM in 2023 will be on **Saturday 24 and Sunday 26 March**. The proposed theme is 'marriage', which should give our speakers scope for a wide variety of talks!

More details and booking forms will be available on the CALH website in due course (www.cornwalllocalhistorians.co.uk), but put the dates in your diaries now!

Memory Matters- living with dementia

We're thrilled to have raised £4,000 towards our Memory Matters project with people living with dementia which means that we can continue the project for another 12 months!

Memory Mondays, designed in partnership with Memory Matters, uses proven Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST) methods to improve brain function and to improve the quality of life for those living with dementia and their families. This year the group of 8 will be focusing on the themes of 'Home' and 'Travel' in relation to our Truro and Spaceport exhibitions, using the exhibitions as a launching point for discussion and cognitive stimulation. In addition to the proven benefits of CST, the workshops also provide a two-hour safe space where participants living with dementia can express themselves with others who are suffering the same disease. The two hours also allow carers and family members to take a break away from their caring responsibilities, which has a positive effect on their relationships and lives.

We have already been invited to speak at the intergenerational Only Connect Conference, and can't wait to share more of our learnings over the next year.

Keep the Past Alive!

Gifts in Wills are a crucial part of helping us to continue to tell the stories of Cornwall's rich cultural heritage for generations to come. Writing a will is one of the most important things you will do and it will ensure your loved ones are cared for after you are gone. It is also your once in a lifetime opportunity to leave the ultimate gift to a cause you are passionate about. By remembering the Royal Cornwall Museum in your Will, your legacy will live on and you will make a lasting difference.

If you have left a gift to the Royal Cornwall Museum in your will, please do let us know as this enables us to plan and to ensure that your support is put to the very best possible use. If you would like to hear more, please contact Jonathan Morton on jonathan.morton@royalcornwallmuseum.org.uk.

Thank you for helping us preserve Cornwall's unique history, heritage and culture.



THANK
YOU!



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