



A lot going on!

Mike Jenks, Chairman

It's been an enjoyably busy year for our Society. From our visits and talks we learned about the Fox family homes and businesses, geology, benchmarks, the work of Falmouth Ambassadors, Plastic Free Falmouth and Shelterbox. Also about art through visiting artists graves and exploring behind the scenes at Falmouth Art Gallery. We have been actively involved in litter picking and the restoration of the wonderful Markey mural behind Tesco (who needs Banksy!)

Our committee monitors planning applications, and our comments can be seen on Cornwall Council's planning website. And, of course there is our central involvement in the never-ending Neighbourhood Plan. This work has included heritage assessments of various town sites, and proposals for protecting places and buildings of historic significance that have not been Listed. The plan should be submitted to Cornwall Council by the year end.

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Mike and Helen Johnson tell the story of FitzRoy's importance in establishing weather forecasting, and our ambition to restore Falmouth's FitzRoy barometer in its rightful place.



Save the planet, and hug a tree!

Jane Boriosi, Social Secretary

You will be aware that we have an environmental theme to some of our talks over the winter months. In October we were all bowled over by the enthusiasm of Kirstie Edwards of Plastic Free Falmouth when she came to talk to us in the Art Gallery. Her organisation is making a real impact in the town and Falmouth Civic Society is looking forward to collaborating further with them. Watch out for details of a Street Litter Pick which we shall be organising in January. We will be posting lots of interesting ideas on our Facebook Page as well as details of how you can help tidy the Terraces.

Thinking of the environment we shall be having a very relevant talk on 21 January on Renewable Energy and Cornwall's involvement. Our guest speaker, Adam Feldman, is a senior lecturer at Exeter University. In February Rosie Walker from the Woodland Trust will be talking to us about trees and this will be at the Bowling Club just next to the Rugby Ground.

If you like the idea of this theme please do tell us and we will try and find further interesting topics for our programme.

Please also note in your new 2019 diaries that our AGM will be held at the Athenaeum Club on Friday 15 March at 6pm and our guest speaker will be Councillor Grenville Chappel.

Blue Plaques - who next?

By Angela Shields

A Blue plaque has been erected to Robert Hunt, the scientist, in Kimberley Park Road and one will soon go up outside the Poly to Anna Maria and Caroline Fox, the founders of RCPS. These have been instigated by the Civic Society but funded by donation.

Our mission statement says: *Committed to the preservation and enhancement of the beautiful and historic Cornish town of Falmouth.* Blue plaques are one way we can take pride in the history of our town and give interest to our visitors, who are already following our town trail to learn more of our town's history.

Falmouth is famous for its Art School and its widely praised Art Gallery. What better way than to choose a female artist who lived in Falmouth and whose work is represented in the Art Gallery?

That artist is Sophie Anderson who moved to England in 1894 and painted and lived at Woodlane Cottage. She continued to exhibit her work in London. She died on 10th March 1903 at her home in Falmouth and is buried at Swanvale Cemetery.

This painting by Sophie Anderson, "Roses" was presented to Falmouth Art Gallery by the Art Fund to celebrate the life and contribution to Falmouth Art Gallery of Brian Stewart, director of the gallery from 2000 until his death in 2010. It was painted in 1894 while Sophie was living in Falmouth and it is believed to have been exhibited in the Falmouth Art Gallery that year. Also, in the possession of the gallery is a sketch of a young girl and a letter from Sophie Anderson.

Sophie Anderson née Gengembre was born in 1823 in Paris and studied portrait painting under Baron Charles von Steuben in Paris. Despite her excellent painting technique, it was not easy for women at that time to have a successful artistic career. At the time of the revolution in 1848, she moved to America with her French architect father and her English mother. She was to become a successful portrait painter in Cincinnati and Pittsburgh, before marrying the English artist Walter

Anderson in Manchester, Pennsylvania and moving to England, where Sophie exhibited at the Royal Academy.

For a short period in 1871, because of Sophie's ill health they moved to Capri. Capri at the time was an artist colony, whose residents included Frederic Leighton, Walter McLaren, John Singer Sargent, Edouard Alexandre Sain and Jean Benner. In 1874 the Andersons returned to England and settled in Falmouth.

So well regarded was Sophie Anderson, that she was the first woman painter to have her work purchased by a public institution: the Liverpool Corporation acquired her painting "Elaine" in 1871. A world record price of over £1,000,000 for her work was achieved at Sotheby's for "No Walk Today" in 2008.

It is said that Sophie developed her interest in art at the age of 17, when a travelling portrait painter visited her town. She had two brothers, Philip and Henry P Gengembre. Her brother Philip changed his name to Hubert, his mother's maiden name and was a successful architect in New York City. Henry P Gengembre, was also an artist, active in Cincinnati in the early 1850s.

Sophie Anderson's portrait, figure and Brittany landscape paintings were exhibited in October 1849 at the Western Art Union Gallery in Cincinnati. Also exhibited was a three-panel set of Victorian London Scenes entitled "The Ladder of Love".

In 1854 the Andersons moved to London where Sophie exhibited a still life of fruit, vegetables, game and fish entitled "An American Market Basket" at the Society of British Artists. The critics said it was "an admirable composition made with surprising truth". Her oil painting "Foundling Girls at Prayer in the Chapel" is displayed at the Foundling Museum, Brunswick Square, London.

At a time when it was difficult for women to have a successful artistic career, Sophie Anderson was successful. Surely, she is a person whom we should celebrate with a Blue Plaque?



Above: Sketch of Young Girl

Left: Roses

Source: Falmouth Art Gallery

Admiral FitzRoy's Barometer

By Mike and Helen Johnson

In viewing the substantial portico of Falmouth's Custom House you will see a forlorn but substantial granite housing with a dilapidated glazed door, with broken glass, which is unworthy of the Grade II* Listed building.

Research undertaken by members of the Committee has revealed that until about 50 years ago it contained one of the barometers which had been inspired, and largely financed, by Robert FitzRoy the famous Captain of HMS Beagle, which bore Charles Darwin on his World voyage of discovery culminating in the publication of 'The Origin of the Species'.

HMS Beagle had in fact surveyed and charted the South America coastline fulfilling a commission by the Admiralty during which Fitzroy further developed his intimate knowledge of the vagaries of ocean sailing. On his return to Britain, via the port of Falmouth, he later studied the weather systems affecting these islands. Realising that changes in barometric pressure were related to ensuing maritime sea conditions he set about trying to predict bad weather; a system which he called weather 'forecasting'.

He was also very concerned about the substantial loss of lives of fishermen living in poor communities around our coasts, where predictions were largely based on folklore and largely erroneous. This prompted him, in an humanitarian mission, to ensure that barometers with a sets of instructions were distributed through the RNLI to all such communities.

One of two barometers donated to Falmouth was set in the granite housing 150 years ago in 1868, and there it remained for about 100 years until it was stolen. Fitting perfectly one of the Society's stated aims of caring for the history and character of Falmouth, we have taken up the challenge of finding a suitable antique replacement and fully refurbishing the granite housing with a much more secure glazed access.

We have now set about obtaining funds in the order of £4,000, which we hope to raise by donations and grant-aid. The Falmouth Harbour Commissioners have already supported our enterprise with a donation of £250 towards the acquisition of the barometer. We have the approval of the Stable Restaurant, the new owners of the Custom House, and a potential offer of help from the Pendennis Yard.

The project is being co-ordinated by Falmouth Civic Society and we very much hope that you will feel able support our endeavour by making a contribution, no matter how small, by contacting any member of your Committee. Ultimately we hope that the resulting publicity will help us to increase our membership.

Top: The FitzRoy barometer to replace the stolen one

Bottom: The Granite housing and damaged glass door, which will need to be moved to the front of the building where it originally was located.

Photos: Mike Jenks and Mike Johnson



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<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Falmouth-Civic-Society/573370802673192>

Old Malins Hall

This building (or rather facade) in High Street is an art deco curiosity, and worth preserving. Sadly it is now badly neglected and at risk. We thought it was the old Kozey Cinema, but further digging led to a different story. Research done by the Falmouth History Archive (FHA) indicates that it was 'a Calisthenic (exercise) Hall in the late 1800s and Temperance meetings were held there in the early 1900s'. Also it was used for a Suffragist meeting in 1911, and was host to The Falmouth Full Gospel Mission Church in the 1930s.'

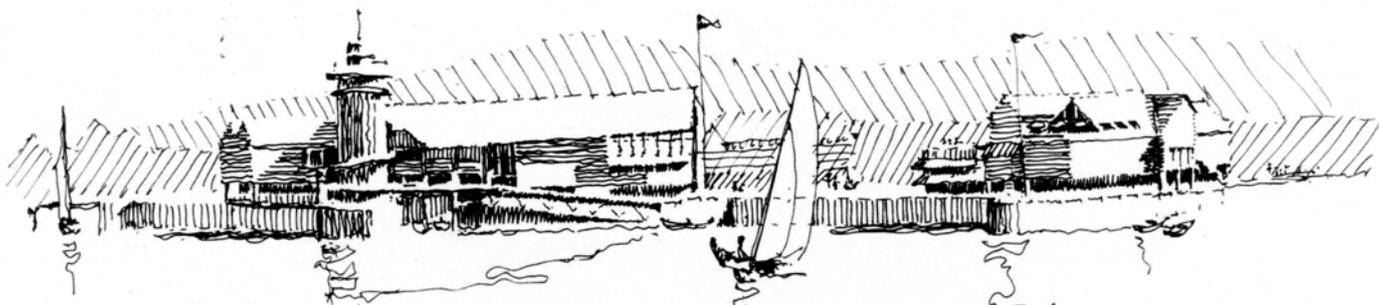
There is some memory of it being used as a garage in the last half of the 20C. Before then it was owned by the Harris Brothers and may have been used for theatre and entertainment. The Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey of 2005 records it as being purpose built for the Kozey Cinema, but this is incorrect. The Kozey Picture Palace was located behind 23 High Street which opened on 14th February 1911. The FHA noted rumours that, after it closed in the 1920s, the 'Kozey later re-located to Malins Hall' but there was 'no evidence to support this'. Its last uses were for an architectural practice's office, and then for a designer and retail outlet, and it is now empty and at risk.

We have proposed this building as one that should be locally listed and thus preserved. Your involvement and further suggestions for buildings you would like to see listed will be very welcome.



Sad Losses

A number of our Members have died recently; Jean Hughes, Hilda Maundell, June Moore, Dick Stiles, and a little while ago, Brinley and Myra Morris and Eric and Dorothy Roberts. Their contribution and sterling support for our Society is greatly missed. Although not a Member, but a very strong supporter of our work was the architect M J Long who died in September. She, with her husband Sandy Wilson, designed the British Library, and she then went on to design many other important buildings, including the NMMC (see her sketch below). She was involved in our Neighbourhood Plan and is a real loss for Falmouth.



Dates for the diary

Monday 21 January, 6.00pm: Talk by **Adam Feldman** on **Renewable Energy**, at King Charles Hall

Tuesday 19 February, 2.30 pm: Talk by **Rosie Walker** on the **Woodland Trust**, at Falmouth Bowling Club

Friday 15 March, 6.00pm: AGM and talk by **Grenville Chappel**, at the Athenaeum Club

Monday 15 April, tbc: Visit to Falmouth University Penryn Campus

A charge of £3.00 is made to cover costs and refreshments.