



Face to Face: Portraits from Penlee's Collection

21 January - 18 April 2026

Penlee House Gallery & Museum

Morrab Road, Penzance TR18 4HE

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Face to Face: Portraits from Penlee's Collections

21 January – 18 April 2026

This display of paintings and sculpture, all from the collections here at Penlee House Gallery & Museum, is an intriguing assortment of portraits of people associated with Cornwall, ranging from stiff formal likenesses of the great and the good to intimate studies of humble fisher-folk, from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day.

Over the centuries, Cornwall has been blessed in playing host to a rich assortment of visiting and resident artists, so its inhabitants have been portrayed by some of the greatest painters of all time. One such is the county's first famous painter, 'the Cornish Wonder', John Opie (1761 – 1807), who was patronised by the Royal family and who so impressed Sir Joshua Reynolds, he described him as 'like Caravaggio and Velasquez in one'.

Not least amongst the artists associated with Cornwall are the Newlyn School painters, of course, and the exhibition includes portraits by Stanhope Forbes, Elizabeth Forbes, Harold Harvey and Dod Procter. Some of the most enchanting paintings are the depictions of the unnamed fishermen, their wives and families by artists such as Edwin Harris and Walter Langley.

The show includes newly acquired works by Leonard Fuller, who ran the St Ives School of Painting from 1938 until his death in 1973, self-portraits by Midge Bruford (1902 – 1958) and Pat Algar (1939 – 2013), and busts by sculptor Barbara Tribe (1913 – 2000).

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Hallway

- Laura Knight DBE RA (1877 - 1970)
Bernard Walke, c.1912
Charcoal on paper
Penlee House - gift through the Art Fund, 1998. 'In Memory of Mary Wales of Newlyn, 1910 – 1997'.
Bernard Walke was Vicar of St Hilary Church for over twenty years. He and his artist wife, Anne, were close friends of many of the 'Lamorna Group' of artists and he invited several of them – including Dod and Ernest Procter, Laura Knight and Harold Harvey – to join Anne in decorating the church with religious panels and altar pieces.
- Walter Langley RI (1852 - 1922)
A Newlyn Fishwife, 1895
Watercolour
Penlee House Gallery & Museum - bequest of Dr Eric Richards, 2012
- Laura Knight DBE RA (1877 – 1970)
Juanita, 1928
Etching
Penlee House Gallery & Museum - The George Bednar Donation
- William John Wainwright (1855 - 1931)
Portrait of Thomas Cooper Gotch, 1882
Watercolour
Penlee House - donated by Pep and John Branfield, 2023

- William John Wainwright (1855 - 1931)
Portrait of Caroline Gotch, 1882
Watercolour
Penlee House - donated by Pep and John Branfield, 2023
- Elizabeth Adela Forbes ARWS (1859 – 1912)
A Newlyn Maid
Oil on canvas
Penlee House Gallery & Museum, on loan from Newlyn Art Gallery
- Stanhope Alexander Forbes RA (1857 - 1947)
Head and Shoulders Portrait of the artist's son, Alec, c.1904
Watercolour
Penlee House Gallery & Museum - bequest of Dr Eric Richards, 2012
In 1904, aged 11, Alec attended Chygidden School, a small preparatory school in Lelant, as a boarder before going to Bedales in Hampshire.
- Elizabeth Adela Forbes ARWS (1859 - 1912)
Boy with a stick, c.1883
Drypoint engraving
Penlee House Gallery & Museum - The George Bednar Donation
- Mortimer Menpes (1855 – 1938)
Whistler, Roguish Smile, Evening
Drypoint engraving
Penlee House Gallery & Museum - The George Bednar Donation
Menpes taught etching to Elizabeth Forbes while she was studying in

Pont-Aven in 1882. He later lived in St. Ives for a time.

Elizabeth Adela Forbes ARWS (1859 - 1912)

Peeling Onions, c.1884-85

Drypoint engraving

Penlee House Gallery & Museum - The George Bednar Donation

Walter Langley RI (1852 – 1922)

Waiting for the Boats, 1890

Watercolour

Private Collection, on loan to Penlee House Gallery & Museum

William John Wainwright (1855 – 1931)

The Old Pilot, 1884

Watercolour on paper

Penlee House Gallery & Museum

Walter Langley RI (1852 – 1922)

A Reverie, 1885

Watercolour

Penlee House - purchased by the Friends of Penlee House, in memory of Jonathan Holmes, 2021

Fred Hall (1860 - 1948)

Self-Portrait

Mixed media

Penlee House. Purchased by the Friends of Penlee House, 2003

This self portrait was executed towards the end of Hall's life.

Gallery 2

Ralph Todd (1856 - 1932)

Woman Mending Nets (untitled)

Watercolour

Penlee House Gallery & Museum - bequest of Dr Eric Richards, 2012

Frank Wright Bourdillon (1851 – 1924)

The Jubilee Hat, 1887

Oil on canvas

Private Collection, on loan to Penlee House Gallery & Museum
This scene depicts preparations for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee celebrations in Newlyn.

Karl Bror Albert Konstrand (1875 - 1950)

Mayor Bazeley, c.1895

Oil on canvas

Penlee House Gallery & Museum
William James Bazeley was Mayor of Penzance in 1895, and again for the first few months of 1897, following the death in office of Mayor Thomas Reynolds. Here he is portrayed wearing court dress, which indicates a royal event, together with the Victoria Diamond Jubilee medal, awarded to all provosts and mayors in office in 1897.

Leonard John Fuller (1891 - 1973)

The Man in the Panama Hat, c.1949

Oil on canvas

Penlee House Gallery & Museum

Portrait of Herbert Thomas, who was Editor of The Cornishman Newspaper for fifty years. He was a great supporter of the arts and in 1949 this portrait was donated by Thomas to the Museum. Herbert Thomas also funded the gates at the Morrab Road entrance to Penlee Park.

After T Lawrence

Humphry Davy

Oil on canvas

Penzance Town Council

Sir Humphry Davy (1778 - 1829), the famous chemist and inventor of the miners' safety lamp, was born in Penzance. During his career he discovered a number of chemical elements, including sodium and potassium, and investigated chlorine and its oxides. He was knighted in 1812, was made a baronet in 1818, and in 1820, he became President of the Royal Society.

NEW ACQUISITION

Leonard John Fuller (1891 - 1973)

The Silver Jacket, c.1930

Oil on canvas

Penlee House – donated in 2024

Elizabeth Adela Forbes ARWS

(1859 – 1912)

Portrait of Stanhope Forbes with Cello, c.1900

Oil on panel

Penlee House Gallery & Museum;

bequest of Adam Woolfitt, 2023

Edward Bouverie Hoyton RS FRSA (1900 – 1988)

Canon Buckley, c.1952-3

Oil on canvas

Penlee House Gallery & Museum

Charles Hector Simeon Buckley obtained a BA from Keble College, Oxford in 1919 and an MA in 1924. As an Oxford undergraduate he volunteered for the army, first as a private in the 28th London

Regiment, later rising to the rank of Captain in the Devonshire Regiment. He fought in Italy, Belgium and France, including at the battle of the Somme. He became a Deacon in 1920 in Birmingham, and then a Minor Canon and Head of the Choir School at Chester Cathedral, before moving to take up the appointment as Vicar of Gulval in 1932, where he remained until his death in 1960. He was an immensely popular man who was a keen member of the British Legion, being Chaplain of the Penzance branch.

John Opie (1761 – 1807)

A Portrait of an Old Jew, c.1779

Oil on canvas

Penlee House - purchased with funding from Art Fund, V&A/ACE Purchase Grant Fund, the Friends of Penlee House and numerous private donations, 2016

This portrait of c.1779 is thought to be of the Penzance Rabbi Abraham Hart (Solomon Lazarus). The sitter looks directly out at us from the shadows, just discernible on his forehead is the Tefillin, a box containing four scrolls inscribed with words from the Torah, the Jewish holy book. This detail shows that the subject was undoubtedly an important person in the Penzance Jewish Community at that time.

Dod Procter RA (1890 – 1972)

Boy and Canary, c.1952

Oil on canvas

*Penlee House Gallery & Museum -
donated in memory of Christopher
James, 2022*

The sitter is Gilbert Gray, whose family lived close to Dod in North Corner, Newlyn, and whom she used for a number of paintings in the early 1950s.

Fred Millard (1857 – 1937)

**The Thread of Life Runs Smooth
as Yet, c.1885**

Oil on canvas

*Penlee House Gallery & Museum -
The George Bednar Donation*

Richard Thomas Pentreath (1806 - 1869)

**Rabbi Barnett Asher Simmons,
c.1839**

Oil on canvas

*Private Collection, on loan to
Penlee House Gallery & Museum*

Barnett Simmons was born in London in 1784 and died in Penzance in 1860. He was apprenticed in 1797 to Abraham Jacobs, a 'Japanner and Painter' in London, and was then pressganged into the Navy (he is said to have served at Trafalgar). He came to Penzance as a rabbi to the Jewish community in 1811, aged 27, and in 1813 he married Flora Jacob from Redruth. He retired in 1854 and moved to South Wales, but returned to Penzance in 1857.

Gallery 3

Harold Harvey (1874 - 1941)

**Portrait of James Jewill Hill Jr,
1920**

Oil on board

*Penlee House - purchased by the
Friends of Penlee House, 2004*

Stanhope Alexander Forbes RA
(1857 - 1947)

**Portrait of James Jewill Hill,
1944**

Oil on canvas

*Penlee House, bequest of Miss
Laura Jewill Hill, 2004*

James Jewill Hill was a partner in the solicitor's firm Jewill Hill and Bennett, Penzance. In 1915 and 1920, he and his wife commissioned artist Harold Harvey to paint portraits of their children Laura, Paul and James Junior, seen here.

Harold Harvey (1874 - 1941)

Laura and Paul Jewill Hill, 1915

Oil on canvas

*Penlee House - bequest of Miss
Laura Jewill Hill, 2004*

During the sitting for this painting Laura recalled getting extremely tired and uncomfortable standing on one leg! The Italian flag was included to celebrate Italy joining the Allies on 23 May 1915. An interesting detail is the self portrait of Harvey in the mirror.

Marjorie Frances 'Midge' Bruford
(1902 - 1958)

'Elephant Bill', (Lt Col J H Williams OBE), 1956

Oil on canvas

Penlee House Gallery & Museum

A soldier and a writer, 'Elephant Bill' was famous for his knowledge and understanding of elephants. His experiences were recounted in an autobiographical book entitled 'Elephant Bill'. He lived in Lamorna at 'Menwinnion', a house originally built for the Heaths.

Stanhope Alexander Forbes RA (1857 - 1947)

The Young Apprentice, Newlyn Copperworks, 1908

Oil on canvas

Penlee House - purchased with funding from the Art Fund and the V&A/MGC Purchase Grant Fund

This shows John Drew MacKenzie, instigator of the Newlyn Industrial Class, instructing Johnny Payne Cotton (who produced Newlyn Copper until the 1950s).

Marjorie Frances 'Midge' Bruford (1902 - 1958)

Self Portrait

Oil on canvas

Penlee House - purchased by the Friends of Penlee House, 2019

Edwin Harris RBSA (1855 - 1906)

Not forgotten, 1884

Oil on canvas

Penlee House – donated in 2024

Ruth Simpson née Alison (1889 – 1964)

Maroon and Gold

Oil on canvas

Penlee House Gallery & Museum, on loan from Newlyn Art Gallery – gift of Miss Leonora Simpson

Ruth Simpson's portraits, such as 'Maroon and Gold', where she set her subject against a bright backdrop depicted in a single colour, were very innovative, and won high praise.

Donald Swan (1929 – 2004)

John in his Red Raincoat, 1965

Oil on canvas

Penlee House Gallery & Museum - gift of an anonymous donor, 2003

The artist's son, age five. The painting was executed in one day, as the sitter was very reluctant to stay still for long! John went on to work at the Lamorna Pottery from 1998 to 2006, before setting up the Pendine Pottery with his artist wife, Gemma.

Gallery 4

Henry Scott Tuke (1858 - 1929)

Going Aloft aka Jack Rolling on the Julie of Nantes, 1888

Oil on panel

Private Collection, on loan to Penlee House Gallery & Museum

Dod Procter RA (1890 – 1972)

Little Sister, 1933

Oil on canvas

On loan from Private Collection

Exhibited at the Royal Academy 1933.

Elizabeth Adela Forbes ARWS (1859 – 1912)

Autumn Breeze

Oil on panel

Penlee House Gallery & Museum - purchased by the Friends of Penlee House with assistance from Annie and Leon Suddaby, 2022

Harold Harvey (1874 - 1941)

Girl on a Cliff, 1926

Oil on canvas

Penlee House - Gift of the artist's wife, Gertrude Harvey

A portrait of Cressida Wearne, aged 14. The artist painted the sitter posing in the garden of his studio and the background was painted in at a later date.

Patricia Algar (1939 - 2013)

Self-Portrait

Acrylic on board

Penlee House - donated in 2023

Born in London, Algar studied at Wimbledon School of Art and the Royal Academy Schools. There she won several prizes for painting and drawing, including the silver medal for composition. She started visiting Nancledra in the mid-1960s, before settling in St Ives in 1976. In the 1990s she spent time in America painting and visiting collectors, exhibiting her work in San Diego and Dallas. Returning to Cornwall she settled in Marazion where she continued to paint and exhibit until her death in 2013.

Walter Langley RI (1852 - 1922)

Time Moveth Not, Our Being 'Tis That Moves, 1882

Watercolour

Penlee House Gallery & Museum - purchased from the estate of Ronald and Beryl Middleton with assistance from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Art Fund, the V&A/ACE Purchase Grant Fund, the Friends of Penlee House and all those individuals who gave money through our donations box, 2014

The sitter is recorded as Grace Kelynack. This was Langley's first success in London, in January 1883, and led to his election to the Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolours later that year. The title of this work is taken from 'Time, A Poem' by Henry Kirke White (1785 – 1806).

John da Costa (1866 – 1931)

Portrait of Marjorie Armstrong, c.1895

Oil on canvas

Penlee House. Frame kindly restored by Paul Treadaway

Miss Marjorie Armstrong was the cousin of Judge Scobell Armstrong of Nancealverne, Penzance.

Richard C Weatherby (1881 - 1950)

Stanley Gardiner at Lamorna, 1945

Oil on canvas

Penlee House Gallery & Museum

Dorothy 'Dobs' Merry (1911 – 1998)

Portrait of a Newlyn Fisherman [Andrew], 1959

Oil on board

Penlee House, donated in 2025

Edwin Harris RBSA (1855 - 1906)

Something Wrong, 1885

Oil on canvas

Penlee House - purchased by the Friends of Penlee House, 2021

The model for this work is thought to be William 'Billy' Maddern, a Newlyn fisherman.

John Armstrong (1893 – 1973)

Veronica as a Clown, 1950

Oil on canvas

Newlyn Art Gallery, on loan to Penlee House

Veronica Sibthorp was John Armstrong's second wife. The couple met in 1938, living first in Kent and later, after the war, in Oriental Cottage in Lamorna, near Penzance. The departing figure is thought to be a self-portrait of the artist leaving Veronica, although the couple did not finally separate until 1955. The picture has an inscription on the back, 'John to Veronica 1952'.

NEW ACQUISITION

Leonard John Fuller (1891 - 1973)

The Beige Hat

Oil on canvas

Penlee House - donated in 2025

This is a portrait of Fuller's wife and fellow artist, Marjorie 'Nancy' Mostyn.

Edward Bouverie Hoyton RS FRSA

(1900 – 1988)

Guy Gibson

Oil on canvas

Penlee House Gallery & Museum

Guy Gibson spent his early years in Penzance and attended West Cornwall School. He was awarded the Victoria Cross in 1943 for his leadership during the legendary Dambusters Raid of the same year but died in action in 1944, aged just 26.

Harold Harvey (1874 - 1941)

Portrait of Rhoda, 1934

Oil on canvas

Penlee House Gallery & Museum - Gift of the sitter, 2003

Bequest of the sitter, Rhoda Littler, who was Harold Harvey's niece and often stayed with Harold and Gertrude when she was a teenager.

Barbara Tribe (1913 – 2000)

Linda [Turney, aged 3], 1951

Terracotta

Penlee House Gallery & Museum

Simon and Linda were the two eldest of Dr W J Turney's four children and the family lived opposite Barbara Tribe in the hamlet of Sheffield in the early 1950s. Dr Turney went on to become Mayor of Penzance in 1971.

Barbara Tribe (1913 – 2000)

Simon [Turney, aged 6], 1951

Bronze

Penlee House Gallery & Museum

Dod Procter RA (1890 – 1972)

Gabriel in St. Lucia

Oil on canvas

Penlee House Gallery & Museum

Gabriel was one of Dod's regular St. Lucian models.

Top of Stairs

Louis William Desanges (1822 – c.1887)

The Capture of Tubabecelong, Gambia, 1866

Oil on canvas

Penlee House Gallery & Museum - Gift of Mrs Nicholas Paul, 1931

This painting commemorates the heroism of Lance-Corporal Samuel Hodge of the 4th West India Regiment, who was the first soldier of African descent to be awarded the Victoria Cross..

William Brooks (fl. 1780 - 1801)

Mount's Bay from Ludgvan, 1794

Oil on canvas

Penlee House - purchased with assistance from the MGC/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, 1984

Gallery 5

Frank Bramley (1857 - 1915)

Eyes and No Eyes, 1887

Oil on canvas

Penlee House Gallery & Museum - purchased with grant aid from: the Art Fund, V &A/MLA Purchase Grant Fund and the Friends of Penlee House, 2009

The scene is set on Gwava's Quay showing the recently completed South Pier in the distance.

Harold Harvey (1874 - 1941)

In the Whiting Ground, c.1900

Oil on canvas

Penlee House - purchased with funding from the MLA/V&A

Purchase Fund, the Art Fund, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Friends of Penlee House, 2006
Whiting is a small fish, usually weighing about 1kg, which is caught between two and six miles off shore.

Walter Langley RI (1852 - 1922)

Cornish Fisherfolk, 1908

Oil on canvas

Walter Langley RI (1852 – 1922)

Among the Missing — Scene in a Cornish Fishing Village, 1884

Watercolour and pencil

Penlee House - purchased with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Art Fund, the V&A/MGC Purchase Grant Fund and the Friends of Penlee House

Newlyn's fishing boats travelled all around the British coast. When one of these long-haul boats was lost at sea, a telegram sent to Newlyn Post Office would be posted on the wall to tell the villagers the name of the lost boat and the list of fishermen who were 'among the missing'.

Elizabeth Adela Forbes ARWS (1859 – 1912)

School is Out, 1889

Oil on canvas

Penlee House Gallery & Museum – Gift of Monica Anthony

Although there are alternative suppositions, it is believed that the

setting for this painting is Paul School and that the small boy is Richard Vivian Spargo, whose two elder sisters are the red-haired girls laughing at him.

Stanhope Alexander Forbes RA
(1857 - 1947)

Abbey Slip, 1921

Oil on canvas

Penlee House Gallery & Museum
Purchased 2010 with support from
the National Heritage Memorial
Fund; MLA/V&A Purchase Grant
Fund; the Friends of Penlee House
and over 250 individual donors,
including donations made in
memory of Gerda Dales, Mrs
Margaret Anne Veitch, Lt.Col.
Martin Scrase and Frank Julian.

Stanhope Alexander Forbes RA
(1857 - 1947)

The Seine Boat, 1904

Oil on canvas

*Private Collection, on loan to
Penlee House Gallery & Museum*
A 'seine' net, which is being carried
in this boat, was used for catching
pilchards. The 'tuck' net, used with
it, is in the boat behind.

Stanhope Alexander Forbes RA
(1857 - 1947)

On Paul Hill, 1922

Oil on canvas

*Penlee House Gallery & Museum -
purchased with funding from the
National Heritage Memorial Fund,
the Art Fund and the Friends of
Penlee House*

Stanhope Forbes lost his first wife,
Elizabeth, to cancer in 1912 and
their only child, Alec was killed in
the First World War four years
later. After the horror, this painting
is full of optimism, with the next
generation basking in Cornish
sunshine, but in the far distance
the Cenotaph (completed the year
this was painted) shines like a
beacon to remember those lost to
save such an idyll.

Norman Garstin (1847 – 1926)

**The Rain it Raineth Every Day,
1889**

Oil on canvas

*Penlee House Gallery & Museum -
Gift of the artist*

The title appears in two of
Shakespeare's plays, most notably
in 'Twelfth Night', but also in the
Fool's song in Act III Scene 2 of
'King Lear'. The blue structure in
the middle-ground of this painting
was a collecting box for the Royal
National Lifeboat Institution, placed
on Penzance promenade in 1877.
For many years this painting lay
hidden in the depths of St John's
Hall as the Town Council felt that it
pictured Penzance in a bad light
and would put off tourists. Today,
this painting is probably the most
popular work in Penlee House's
collections and prints of it have
been spotted all over the world.