

ST IVES – THE STORY OF PORTHMEOR STUDIOS

Marion Whybrow

Situated with unintentional perfection where the modest stone cottage of Alfred Wallis and the modern architectural triumph that is Tate St Ives rub shoulders, lie the Porthmeor Studios. From here, looking out on the Atlantic blue, successive waves of artists have cemented the continuity of one of the world's most enduring and influential art colonies. In recent times the importance of the studios has been underlined through a major programme of renovation that has secured their future both as working studios while retaining their traditional use by local fisherman.

The first artists to arrive in St Ives at the end of the nineteenth century were of independent means. Their paintings, often picturesque scenes of harbours and seascapes, were frequently exhibited at the Royal Academy alongside the more dramatic paintings of their Newlyn contemporaries. It was not until the 1930s that changes began to take place with the rise of Nazi Germany and its anti-progressive art movement, the closing down of the Bauhaus and the fleeing of avant garde artists to Britain and America. Modernism had arrived. Many of these artists, now famous names, came to St Ives and developed their painting and sculpture with a feeling for place and spirituality, acknowledging and interpreting the power that Cornwall exerts on creative people. Often without the financial means of their predecessors, these artists sought studio space in fish lofts and cellars, many by this date abandoned by a fishing industry in decline.

In 1947 when the artist Borlase Smart, a stalwart of the art colony, died the Borlase Smart Trust was established, purchasing the studios and securing their use for the future. Patrick Heron, Bernard Leach, John Park, Ben Nicholson, David Cox, Leonard Fuller, Karl Weschke, Breon O'Casey, Sandra Blow, Terry Frost and Wilhelmina Barnes Graham are just a handful of names of those who occupied the studios in the post-war period.

In the present day the renamed Borlase Smart John Wells Trust was able to raise funds to form a 'regeneration' programme and save the studios, and also the net lofts occupied by the fishermen, from a state of dilapidation to a joyful renaissance that will ensure the future for both artists and mariners. This book looks at the work of artists past and present. It is both a reminder of the rich past of the Porthmeor Studios and a celebration of their future, now secured.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

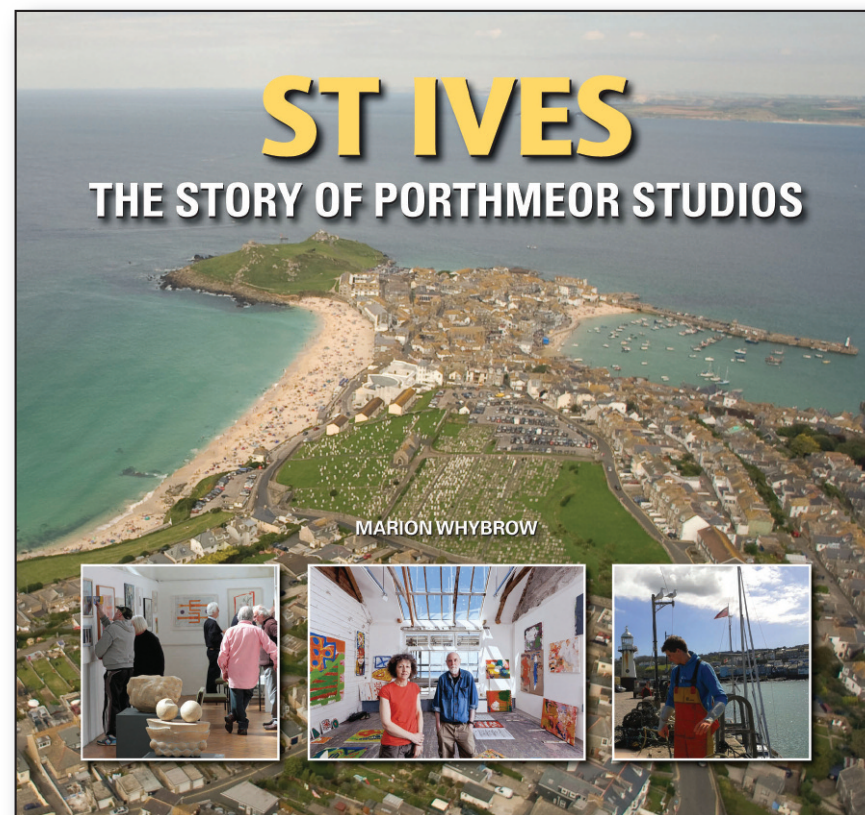
Marion Whybrow writes about painters, potters and sculptors, drawing on the rich culture of St Ives as an art colony. Her book *Borlase Smart. St Ives Artist - Man of Vision* was published by Halsgrove in 2012. She is married to the artist Terry Whybrow. They moved to St Ives from London in 1980 to pursue their chosen careers in writing and painting. They have two daughters who have joined them in the West Country.

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Above: Alfred Wallis's Cottage



Fishermen on the Pier 1900



Above: Porthmeor Studios and Fish Lofts with Improvements

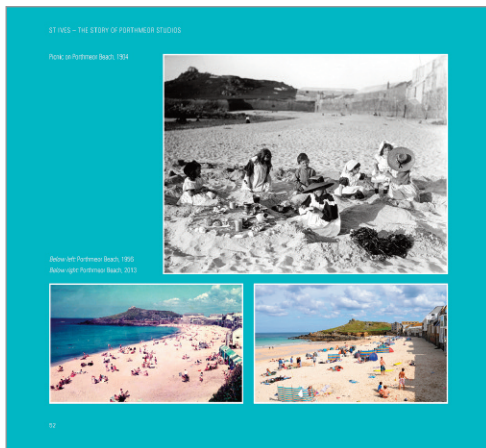


Right" St Ives Arts Club 1895. Louis Grier, founder member seated left. Standing Alexander, John Bromley, Harewood Robinson. Seated centre Maria Robinson, Helen C Ludby, unknown man, Lily Kirkpatrick, Daisy and Sarah Whitehouse, Lowell Dyer

Right: 20th Anniversary. Tate St Ives 2013



Below: Clare Wardman and Iain Robertson in No.7 Porthmeor Studios



Example of a double-page spread.