

Significant others

HIDDEN MEANINGS

Unforeseen constellations

At 6pm on 16 December near Truro, a very special piece of art will be on show to the public. As part of Pencalenick School's Christmas Carolaire, with the Truro Brass Band, visitors will be able to experience the Penhaligon Star glistening in the school grounds. The Penhaligon Star sculpture is a fitting memorial to popular Cornish MP David Penhaligon, who died in a car accident in 1986. On her wreath at David's funeral, his widow Annette quoted a poem from Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet':

When he shall die  
Take him and cut him out in little stars  
And he will make the face of heaven so fine  
That all the world shall be in love with night

Using the poem as a starting point, Mor Design worked with students on developing the ideas for the memorial. The proposal became a big star to sit on and in - a conversation bowl with star points as a catwalk. It is also a shelter with a sense of enclosure, a frame that enhances the views into the garden. Its curved star points have little star-shaped holes that let through the light - and the poem is integrated with the artwork in celebration of Penhaligon's legacy.

Info For tickets call Pencalenick School on 01872 520385.

Look closer

Don't pass by without a glance, from railings to benches, the reanimation of our public spaces could be hiding a fascinating detail:

- The poetry under the decked benches on The Moor in Falmouth.
- The Bude Light (Millennium Cone) sculpture remembering Bude's forgotten genius, Sir Goldsworthy Gurney, with its fibre-optic constellations in the base.
- The Camel Trail, between Bodmin and Wadebridge, with its leaf-shaped bike racks and poetry benches.
- The tidal planters in Lemon Quay, Truro, which show the patterns of tides back when the Quay was open to boats.
- Camborne Library railings, which features the titles of books that represent Cornwall, as chosen by the librarians.
- The 'Miner' standing proud in the heart of Fore Street, Redruth.



Top Quotes from servicemen who were involved in the St Nazaire raid in 1942  
Above The 10m-high Killigrew Monument near Events Square in Falmouth

obelisks or a man on a horse or a pedestal. These days, most public artworks have come off the pedestal and are quite often expected to work harder down amongst the crowds.

Two waterfront pieces of art in Falmouth are good examples of this shift - the rather ambiguous Killigrew Monument near the National Maritime Museum and the recently rededicated St Nazaire Memorial on the Prince of Wales Pier.

The Killigrew Monument is a stunning 10m sharp pyramid that commemorates one of Falmouth's well-known families. The monument sparks curiosity owing to its awesome geometric beauty, but the lack of information surrounding it means that it falls short of truly engaging the public. We are further held at arm's length by planting and railings. The monument's anonymity purposefully conceals the true story behind the Killigrew family, as research suggests that not only is it a tribute to the family's contribution to Falmouth town but also links to stories of piracy, greed and ambition.

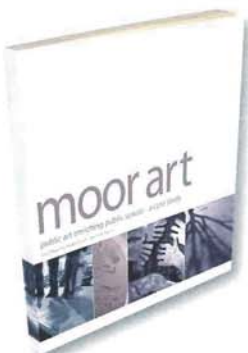
In comparison, the rededicated St Nazaire Memorial on the Prince of Wales Pier in Falmouth is a far more accessible and welcoming piece of art. Seven white concrete oval plinths draw the eye towards the stone memorial, and on each plinth are quotes from servicemen involved in the raid. During research for its commission, Falmouth-based Mor Design, spatial designers and specialists in public art, examined the extensive historical significance of the St Nazaire raid before developing the design, which aims not only to enhance the existing memorial but also to increase visitors' understanding of the audacious event itself. Those taking part in the invasion set off from Falmouth in March 1942 with the aim of destroying the St Nazaire dock in France and preventing the Tirpitz, the Germans' largest and most powerful warship, from being put to sea and destroying Allied shipping. By aiming to satisfy physical, emotional and spiritual human needs surrounding the history of this memorial, the redesign of the public space encourages people to take a moment to reflect on this event. Such islands of calm and contemplation are much needed in public spaces today and offer an interactive experience for those passing by.

Another evocative memorial that engages the public can be found in Redruth. As part of the successful public realm regeneration project in the town, a pack of bronze hounds has been installed by internationally known artist David Kemp, called the Tinnors Hounds. The original hounds were made from the discarded rubber wellies of miners that littered the mine after it closed down in 1990, ending a 4000-year history of tin mining in the area. The idea was to celebrate the legacy of the miners' labour in a light-hearted and inspiring way. The hounds, now cast in bronze rather than their original rubber, are described by David Kemp as "relics of a vast underground workforce that rarely saw the light of day... released from their subterranean labours, they now wander the cliff tops looking for a proper job".

The significance and relevance of art in public spaces has grown and changed over the last ten years in Cornwall, and artists have played a significant role in transforming them. This has seen creative freedom flourish, with practical everyday objects such as handrails, bike racks, tree grates, lighting, planters and bollards becoming art, resulting in a more profound interaction between the public and the public space. So when you're visiting our town centres or more rural destinations, look around at the increasing number of artistic expressions that provoke memories, inspire your imagination or just make you giggle. Through art, meaningful public space takes on a unique identity, suitable for multiple functions. A space with a 'soul' becomes a place. <

Info Mor Design, Falmouth Ambulance Building, Quarry Hill, Falmouth. Visit [www.mor-design.co.uk](http://www.mor-design.co.uk) for more details.

“ Art can do much to reconnect people with their local community ”



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