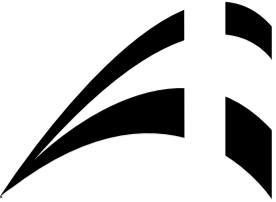


Living Cornwall



Festival heralds world celebration of male choirs

Hundreds of male voices in eight choirs are preparing to provide a musical taster of the feast to come at this year's Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival.

The main event, taking place from April 29 to May 4, will feature singers from across the world at a number of venues across Cornwall.

But before that, a host of Cornish talent will be joined by Huntingdon Male Voice Choir to perform three gala concerts in Redruth, Newquay and Bodmin to raise funds both for the biggest international festival in the event's 14-year history, as well as for the Intensive Care Unit Fund at the Royal Cornwall Hospital.

"This is our first mini festival ahead of our major event," said Peter Davies (pictured), director of the Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival. "And because so many choirs wanted to take part we decided to have three fundraising concerts across Cornwall instead of just one.

"Personally, this is a chance for me to thank staff at the Royal Cornwall Hospital for saving my life four years ago – as well as to celebrate 20 years of directing Huntingdon Male Voice Choir. It's also part of my 'goodbye' as this will be my final year directing Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival."

Along with Huntingdon, the gala concerts will involve Nankersley, Four Lanes and City of Truro male voice choirs singing at Redruth Methodist Church at 7.30pm on February 27. St Michael's Church in Newquay will see an appearance by St Stythians and Newquay male voice choirs and Trenance Learning Academy Choir on February 28 at 2.30pm. And Huntingdon will be joined by Loveny Male Voice Choir at St Petroc's Church in Bodmin at 7.30pm on Sunday March 1.

"Our mini festival promises to be a truly memorable event and these concerts are a great curtain-raiser for the international festival," said Mr Davies. "Many of Cornwall's finest singers performing in these three beautiful buildings will be going on to sing in our line-up of world choirs just a few weeks later."

Tickets for all three gala concerts are priced £8 and are available by ringing Terry Coplin on 01726 66790.

The seventh biennial Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival is the largest event of its kind in Europe, with almost 70 choirs of all ages and nationalities performing 60 concerts and celebrations in 50 venues from April 29 to May 4 2015.

Singers will be travelling from South Africa, Canada, USA, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, Lithuania, Estonia and Germany, as well as from Wales, Scotland England and of course Cornwall itself. Some 40,000 people are expected to attend the events.

For full details visit cimvcf.org.uk

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Tuning in to the mountains of the mind

BY ROGER MALONE

Artist Kate Walters is a dreamer. But in a practical, aesthetic sense – not in some indolent state of wishful thinking.

All her life she has had vivid dreams. Over the past 25 years she has written them down for fear of forgetting them.

Penzance-based Kate has turned her creative talents to exploring these images. From her West Penwith studio, surreal, thought-provoking visions have manifested themselves on paper. Once seen, their distinctive style marks the subjects out in our memory. Intriguing compositions conjured from the subconscious; tapping into both the particular and the universal.

Some of them can be seen at her exhibition, *Beside the Mountain, Becoming the Mountain*, at The Plough Arts Centre in Torrington.

"The work is about all the experience I have been lucky to have had in my life – distilled and refined through creativity," said Kate.

She has a fascination and love of animals. She also has a love of nature which comes from walking in wild mountain ranges and appreciating the microcosm in her own garden. In her art these themes combine, as if becoming one – a horse and a human form grow from each other; a woman harmoniously joined with a tree.

"It is about how things are connected and about how all things are alive," she said. "Physicists have discovered this – but indigenous people have always known that. A stone is alive with atoms dancing like crazy."

When she starts a work Kate says she isn't controlling it – but is responding to the suggestions.



The Bird My Brother by Kate Walters, who says painting is a little like walking in mountains

"I struggle with the word 'imagination' which suggests that I have imagined it. I haven't. But I do feel it in my body. It is a physical thing, but I don't imagine it in my head."

For Kate, the painting is a journey of discovery; exciting but hard work. "It's like climbing a mountain – you just have to keep going. I know when to stop when it's telling me something I didn't know before. It is to do with the truth that we cannot see with the 'brain mind'."

Kate admits setting the creative bar high for herself – and for others. "What is important to me is my work. I like talking about it. I'm not saying people have to listen. But, when I lecture at universities, it's part of a context.

"What I say sits comfortably with the people there because they are interested in the theme that I am exploring."

There is a deceptive simplicity in some of her work because, while an image may seem straightforward, it contains a lot seeded into it.

"I try and show the sharing and the struggle," said Kate, who is a member of Newlyn Society of Artists.

"The paintings are about shared bodies, a tenderness between the human and the animal.

"What happens in our body is not so different as in a horse's body. I would wish that certain factory farming practices didn't happen and that animals are treated with respect because they are emotional beings. That is obvious – but now scientists have proved it."

Turning dreams into an art form makes fascinating creativity. While making drawings of people's dreams in London, Kate was approached by singer and songwriter Marc Almond's agent asking if she would like to work with him.

"I spent two afternoons with him. He talked about animals. Then I asked him to sit in silence. He was very relaxed. Then I tuned into who he is and his memory and I made drawings about them."

Kate's art features in Marc's new album, *The Velvet Trail*, which will be released in March.

Of dreams, she says they teach something that is beyond her experience and way of looking at something.

"I rarely have bad dreams. On the whole they are not disturbing but illuminating and reassuring. It is an ability to see. In the old days the person who did the seeing was the artist."

Kate has a show called *Theatre of the Soul* at Bridport Arts Centre running until February 28, and an exhibition at the Millennium Gallery, St Ives, from February 20 to March 24, featuring 22 works. She will be running a Drawing on Your Own Inner Creativity workshop at The Plough on Saturday February 28.

Lugger restoration offers rare chance to learn traditional boatbuilding skills

BY SIMON PARKER
Living Cornwall Editor

Well-known Cornish oar-maker, rowing club champion and historian Leon Pezzack is offering a "practical youngster with a passion for maritime heritage" the unique opportunity to restore a traditional lugger.

Leon, whose family has lived in Mousehole for centuries, says he hopes to pass on some of his own skills to an out-of-work teenager interested in wooden boatbuilding.

The vessel in need of some serious TLC has been renamed *CHJ* – after a boat which operated out of the West Cornwall port a century ago. Built by the renowned Frazer family of Mevagissey in 1906, the 18ft wooden vessel was acquired by Leon for just £100 from a couple who had been keeping her in Penzance Dock. Far from seaworthy, she was towed around to Mousehole and is currently ashore on the village car park.

"It would be a shame to let this lovely old boat rot away through neglect," said Leon. "So when I came across her I thought it would be a good project to help a young person with an interest in Cornwall's maritime heritage to learn some traditional boat repair skills."

With his wife Sylvia, Leon instigated the biennial Sea Salts & Sail maritime festival in Mousehole in 1996. He said the aim is to complete the restoration of *CHJ* – which stands for Charles Henry James – by next spring to allow time for sea trials and

crew training ahead of the Sea Salts & Sail festival in July 2016.

With the full backing of the Sea Salts & Sail Association, he is now looking for covered premises to use as a workshop and is accepting applications for an apprentice.

"She'd lain unused in the dock for about four years and the couple who owned her were keen she went to a good home," he said. "This restoration project seemed ideal. She's leaking and there's some rot on the port side where she was leaning on the quay, but all these jobs offer training opportunities in marine shipwrighting in a working environment."

The list of jobs runs to two pages, from removing rotten timbers and steaming oak ribs to refastening copper nails and replacing the stern boards. The aim is to replicate a three-masted Mousehole-based lugger, the sort used when the harbour was the home port of six Channel pilots.

"Having worked in the maritime trade, I propose to oversee and train this person, under the auspices of the Sea Salts & Sail Association," said Leon, who chairs Mousehole Archive Society. "I hope the opportunity to restore a 18ft wooden sailing pilot lugger to shipshape condition will be an attractive proposition."

As well as recruiting a practically-minded youngster, Leon – who, in 1970, designed Nourour, the first gig to be built on Scilly for a century – also needs to raise approximately £8,500 to fund the project.



Leon Pezzack with the lugger CHJ and (right) working on another project

PICTURES: PHIL MONCKTON



"I believe there are youngsters out there who would like to learn a skill, but either don't get the chance or lack the confidence to look for that chance," said Leon, who started a rowing club in the village in 1978 and also built Senara for Zennor Gig Club. "I would like to offer a youngster the chance to learn a hands-on skill in the maritime trade. In turn, this boat, once restored and run by a trust, would be available for young people to learn to sail, under supervision, in and around Mousehole and Mount's Bay."

Anyone wishing to assist in the restoration in any way or who wishes to find out more about the apprenticeship can call Leon or Sylvia Pezzack on 01736-731655.



CHJ ready for restoration at Mousehole Harbour



Mount's Bay lugger Children's Friend taking part in the Sea Salts & Sail festival off Mousehole