

Cornwall Wildlife Trust Dynamic Dunescapes workshop Press Release: for immediate release

Local Artist To Lead Free Art Workshops Exploring Penhale Dunes and Saint Piran

In February, environmental artist Peter Ward will lead a series of public art workshops, in conjunction with Cornwall Wildlife Trust, to explore the unique ecology of Penhale Dunes and their links to the legend of St Piran.

Through a series of four workshops, community groups will consider the geology, ecology and history of Penhale Dunes through time, via the story of Saint Piran. Groups will participate through observational drawing, sensitive foraging and imaginative experience of this 'dynamic dunescape', and then be invited to express what they have learnt through simple paintings and drawings, using paint made from Cornish earth pigments. This will take place at Livingstone St Ives Gallery in Perranporth, where the works will then be exhibited, to coincide with St Piran's Day on 5th March 2022.

Artist Peter Ward said "Thanks to its diverse geology and rich cultural heritage, Cornwall offers a fantastic range of earth colours and many myths and legends engendered within the landscape. So, while earth pigments and local stories are unique to an area, they also offer a unifying anthropological reflection of the art of earth cultures around the world. In this age of ecological uncertainty, the importance of understanding and better connection to the places we live and the expression of our indigenous identity could not be more relevant. Our project with Cornwall Wildlife Trust's Dynamic Dunescapes project offers a great opportunity to do just this."

The coastal dunes of England and Wales are internationally important habitats for wildlife, listed as one of the most threatened environments in Europe for biodiversity loss. Over time, many dunes have become covered by thick vegetation which has over-stabilised the sand, and invasive species which are out-competing rarer ones. Although moving sand was once seen as a threat and to be controlled at all costs, we now know that a healthy dune system needs areas of freely-moving sand as part of a mosaic of habitat types, to support a diverse mix of wildlife.

Cornwall Wildlife Trust's People Engagement Officer Andy Nelson said "As part of the Dynamic Dunescapes project, we are giving grants to artists who have ideas for community projects that will increase public interest in one of the most threatened habitats in Europe: sand dunes. We hope that through these small-scale but meaningful projects, people will gain an appreciation of these wonderful habitats and, in turn, help to keep them special in the long-term."

The artworks created by the groups will be on display at Livingstone St. Ives gallery in Perranporth. Gallery director Alicia Livingstone said "The Cornish landscape has been an inspiration to artists for centuries and we're delighted to help preserve this unique part of it. We can't wait to display these artworks drawing on the history and the ecology of the dunes, which have always been a space of spiritual reflection as well as a place to engage with nature. We're honoured to support this project's aims of community engagement and the idea that art is for everyone to create, enjoy and share with others."

The workshops will be held during February with Perranporth Primary School and a local art group, as well as two further workshops which will be free to the public and bookable through Eventbrite (search Eventbrite for Peter Ward).

For further information, please get in touch with Peter at pete-ward@live.co.uk and Livingstone St. Ives at imogen@livingstonestives.co.uk.

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Information for editors:

Dynamic Dunescapes is a partnership project, restoring sand dunes across England and Wales for the benefit of wildlife, people and communities. Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the EU LIFE Programme, in Cornwall the project is being delivered by Cornwall Wildlife Trust, with Penhale Dunes one of the focal points. Many dune-loving species, such as the silvery leaf-cutter bee, need areas of bare sand to thrive, so this project is rejuvenating the dunes by increasing the amount of bare sand in places. Other specialised creatures need us to improve dune slacks, as these damp and water-filled dips behind the dunes are important habitat for amphibians like frogs and toads, and birds like the skylark. Invasive species are also being removed from the dunes to improve conditions for rarer plants, so they can flourish again.

Peter Ward (www.peterward-artist-illustrator.co.uk, @peteward.artist/Instagram) is one of the southwest's leading advocates of ecological art, specialising in research around the geology, history and creative applications of hand gathered and processed earth pigments from mining waste and natural landforms. He has led and contributed towards environmental art projects nationally and internationally, raising awareness and engaging participants with the natural fabric of where they live. While the pigments Peter uses are geologically and chemically unique to the area, they also offer an anthropological reflection of the art of earth cultures around the world. In this age of ecological uncertainty, the importance of understanding and better connection to the places we live, to our indigenous identity, could not be more relevant.

Livingstone St. Ives sources and exhibits contemporary and modern art associated with St. Ives, its artistic heritage, and future direction. It places special emphasis on representing artists living or working in Cornwall in the medium of oil painting. Founded by Alicia Livingstone in 2020, the gallery displays a curated edit of artwork in a welcoming, domestic setting, alongside an eclectic mix of furniture and textiles from around the world.

Cornwall Wildlife Trust has been protecting Cornwall's wildlife, both on land and in our seas, since 1962. It is the leading conservation membership charity in Cornwall, with over 17,000 members including over 4,500 junior members and 160 Business Supporters. The charity manages 59 nature reserves across Cornwall, including a range of habitats such as woodlands, meadows, wetlands and heaths. It also runs a number of marine and terrestrial based conservation projects in partnership with others, including Upstream Thinking and [Penwith Landscape Partnership](#), and hosts the [Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly \(ERCCIS\)](#). The Trust relies on charitable donations, grants and the generous support of its members and the generic public to raise more than £2.2 million every year. Money raised is spent on wildlife conservation and education in Cornwall, for present and future generations. The Trust is one of 47 in the UK. Together, they make up the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts.

Visit www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk or follow [@cwallwildlife](#) on Twitter or Cornwall Wildlife Trust on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) to keep up to date with Trust's campaigns, events and news.

According to popular legend, St Piran, the patron saint of Cornwall and Miners, landed at Penhale Sands in the 4th Century after a voyage from Ireland tied to a rock. He was befriended by a badger, a fox and a bear who became his disciples and went on to build a chapel in the dunes - evidence of which still remains to this day. The shifting sands of Penhale Dunes will have changed a great deal since then, and it is this story of transformation that will form the basis of an artistic exploration for the project.