

JOHN RAPSON GALLERY REFURBISHMENT AND NEW EXHIBITION LAUNCH

'*In Reflection: Photographs, Peacemakers and Emily's Path*' will open on March 20th as planned. The launch event will take place on March 19th: Katie McClaughry will enhance the evening with her harp performance, whilst Olive & Co will provide the buffet. Guests in attendance will include designers Wignall and Moore, McDougall Trust - donors behind the portraits of Leonard and Catherine Courtney, and conservator Sarah Cove. I would like to express my gratitude to all museum volunteers, especially Kevin, Alison, Brian, and Sally, who all have contributed extra time and lots of skill to this exhibition.

THE JOHN RAPSON DIGITISATION PROJECT

Our museum will feature in an upcoming Museum Development South West (MDSW) blog titled *Unlocking Potential: Success Stories from the 2025 Small Open Grants*. The purpose of the blog is to celebrate museum's work and inspire applications for the current year's grant programme. We will circulate the copy when it comes out. We are very proud of this feature.

We are planning on applying for the MDSW Small Open Grants this year, too. The application will focus either on the redevelopment of the Henry Rice room (mining exhibit), or our Learning Programme, depending on which project fulfils the criteria best.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

February half-term was circus-themed, and all activities were well attended. Lizzie, our Learning Volunteer, delivered 4 workshops over two days. We continue to use Eventbrite for museum bookings, which has made our administration of the events more efficient. We also welcomed Bernie from Cakey Faces with her face painting services in John Allen room on one of the activity days. In total, 139 adults and 95 children visited the museum (compared to 2025: 122 adults and 72 children).

Easter half-term will be inspired by our new exhibition in the Rapson Gallery: expect Photography and Emily Hobhouse to be dominant themes.

In May, we will host the Cornish Bottle Archive on our premises. This temporary exhibition is expected to be presented in the Daniel Gumb room, between May 5th – May 30th. More details to follow.

HAZARDS IN COLLECTIONS PROGRAMME & FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Museum Volunteer Kevin and I have continued our training in Hazards in Museum Collections, which has been very useful. Sadly, we have not had the capacity to apply for funding associated with the programme.

CORNWALL HERITAGE AWARDS 2026

Following positive result at the 2025 gala (Best Exhibition Award amongst Smaller Organisations for *Threads: Capturing memories woven in fabric*), we are working on our submissions for this year's event. Unfortunately, our brand-new exhibition *In Reflection* won't qualify until next year's awards, but we hope that our John Rapson Digitisation Project, and the hard work of our volunteers might get recognised in other categories. The awards ceremony will take place on May 19th at the National Maritime Museum Cornwall in Falmouth. Wish us luck!

VOLUNTEERING TEAM

We currently have 20 volunteers on our records, with 9 attending regularly. Although we have paused active recruitment for a short while, a new member has just joined us, as a result of the 'word of mouth' recommendation from one of the existing volunteers. Debbie will be starting with us next week and is looking to support the museum through collection care.