

## AN EVENING WITH PETE GOSS



Clouds of colourful code flags greeted those arriving at the Guildhall, St. Ives to hear the talk by yachting hero Pete Goss last Friday evening. The façade and forecourt had been 'dressed overall' for the occasion organised as a fundraiser by the St. Ives Jumbo Association.

Standing in for their chairman, Harry Isaacs, Jonny Nance welcomed the assembly, thanking the St. Ives Lions Club for not only securing a free booking of the Guildhall but also running the bar stocked with donations from St. Austell, Sharps and Skinners Breweries. He also thanked the pupils of year 6 of St. Ives Junior School for participating in a painting competition. An exhibition of their work featuring the iconic 'jumbo' decorated the hall. The best 12 have been selected to illustrate a Jumbo Association calendar for 2011.

In order to provide some background to the Jumbo Association and to introduce the evening's speaker, Jonny welcomed the radio presenter Janette Eathorne onto the stage, whom he introduced as his childhood neighbour from the heart of the old part of St. Ives known as Downalong.

Janette's reminiscences painted a scene, made all the more vivid by her 'Downalong' accent, reflecting the cohesive community in which she was raised which has all but vanished today. She described how Jonny's father had measured up her father's punt and that it was the discovery of these measurements that inspired Jonny to build a replica of her father's boat. This, in turn, eventually led to the building of the first jumbo. The evening, she explained, was to raise funds to launch a second jumbo in order to establish a racing class for the town. The Association had already created a sense of identity within the community and she was confident that this shared involvement with the town's maritime heritage would do much to help restore some of its former cohesion.

For over an hour he held the audience that that packed the Guildhall in rapt attention. Without reference to notes and scarcely pausing to draw breath, he took them on a roller-coaster ride of triumph over adversity from his humble beginnings (when seeking sponsorship in London for a Transatlantic race meant sleeping on park benches), to the tumultuous heroes welcome at the finish of the *Vendée Globe*, the single-handed, non-stop race around the world recognised as one of the ultimate human challenges.

His description of the dramatic rescue of a fellow competitor in the wastes of the Southern Ocean left one in no doubt that this was truly an exceptional man. Yet, despite a string of high-profile successes proving that almost anything can be achieved through determination, he clearly remains in touch with his modest origins winning over the audience with his humility and humour and leaving them moved, inspired and empowered.

In his unique and highly entertaining style David Lay auctioned 8 items including paintings by Jeremy Le Grice, and Sarah Williams, and promises donated by the Gurnards Head Hotel and John Davison, the owner of the trawler *Donna Capel* raising nearly £1000 for the cause.

As is now customary at these events, the evening concluded with singing round the bar spurred on by the combined voices from The Cadgwith Singers and Falmouth Shout!

The total raised during the event was just over £3000. This leaves the Jumbo Association with only a further £5500 to raise before the launch of the second jumbo on **Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> June** at St.Ives Regatta



*Surrounded by images of the iconic jumbo, the projects instigator, Jonny Nance is joined by enthusiastic supporters Pete Goss (centre) and Andrew George MP (right) Photo credit: Tobi Carver, The St.Ives Times and Echo.*

The new boat is to be named **William Paynter** after the famous St.Ives boatbuilder who designed them.

“This has been another triumph for not just the Association but for St.Ives as a whole and one of an altogether different calibre.” says Jonny Nance. “The warmth and sense of goodwill that Pete generated gave the evening almost spiritual significance. Pete spoke of a tipping point where a project starts to become self-generating: well, I think we can safely say after tonight– we’ve got there!”

The jumbo **Celeste** will be relaunched in St.Ives harbour following the May Day celebrations on Mon 3<sup>rd</sup> May. ENDS