

Every care has been taken to ensure the information contained in this publication is correct at time of printing; however, Plymouth City Council cannot be held responsible for any errors, omissions or actions being taken on reliance on it.

Plymouth
Britain's Ocean City

PLYMOUTH'S
**BOOK OF
WONDER**
OVER 100 AMAZING FACTS

To find out more about Plymouth, Britain's Ocean City
contact the Enterprise and Inward Investment team on:

T +44 1752 307360

E invest@plymouth.gov.uk

W investplymouth.co.uk

🐦 @investplymouth

📌 Economic Development@Plymouth City Council

Other useful websites:

visitplymouth.co.uk

theboxplymouth.com



THIRD EDITION

Welcome to the third edition of the Plymouth Book of Wonder, we've combined some of our favourite facts from the previous two editions alongside some new quirky and fascinating facts about Britain's Ocean City. The book continues to give you a flavour of what makes Plymouth the vibrant, creative and exciting ocean city that it is today.

Plymouth is an ambitious city with huge growth potential and is undergoing exciting changes, with many more on the horizon. We have already seen the transformation of Millbay and Royal William Yard, now a cultural hotspot for restaurants, art galleries and events. It's this creativity and vibrancy, along with our spectacular waterfront location and rich heritage that provides such a fantastic quality of life, making Plymouth, Britain's Ocean City the perfect location to live, work and invest.

A number of new facts in this edition are from The Box, Plymouth's new cultural visitor attraction opening with an engaging and highly immersive exhibition programme, showcasing international visual arts, media and Plymouth's rich heritage.

To find out more about business opportunities in Plymouth, contact the Enterprise and Inward Investment team on:

T +44 1752 307360

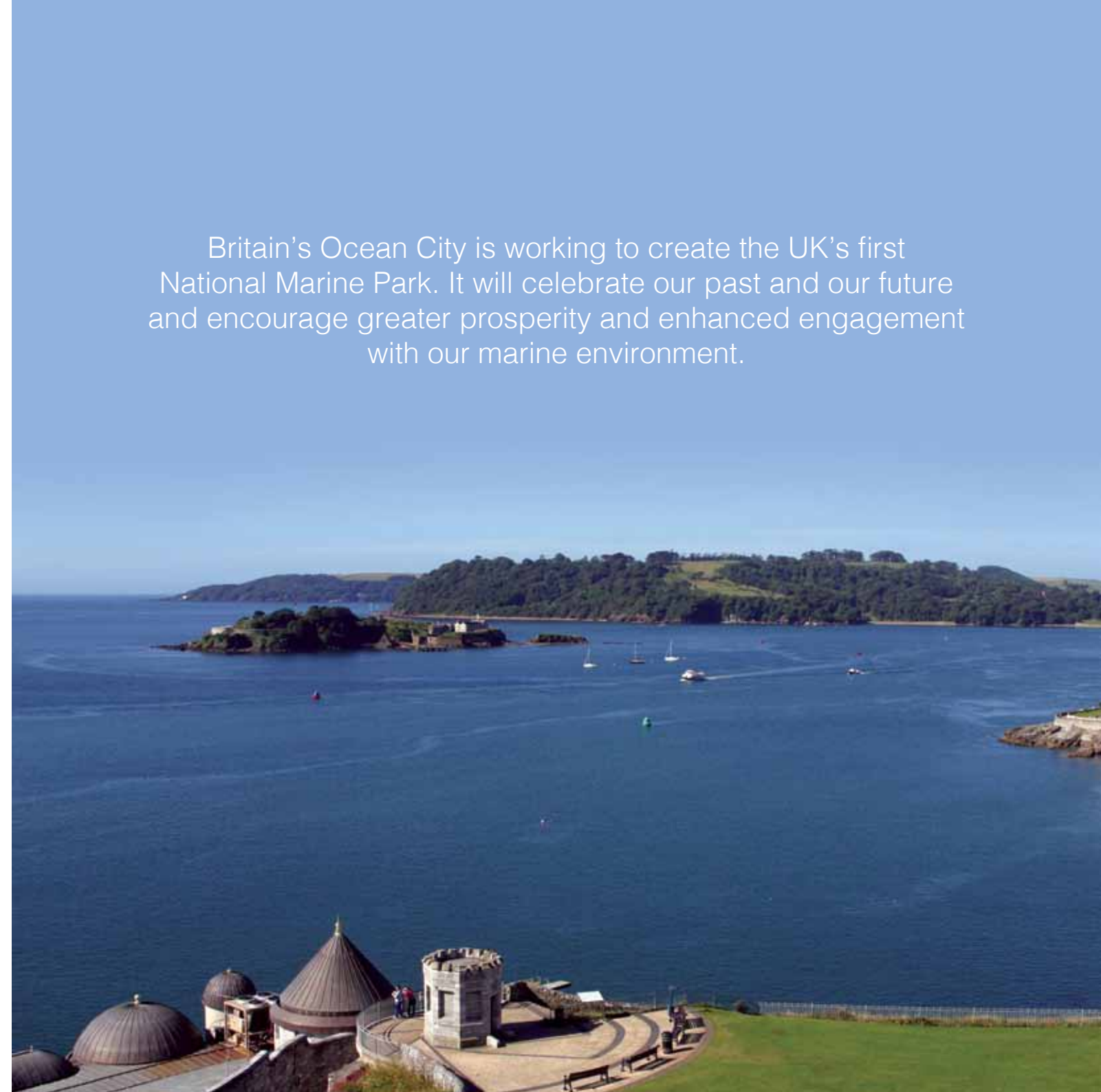
E invest@plymouth.gov.uk

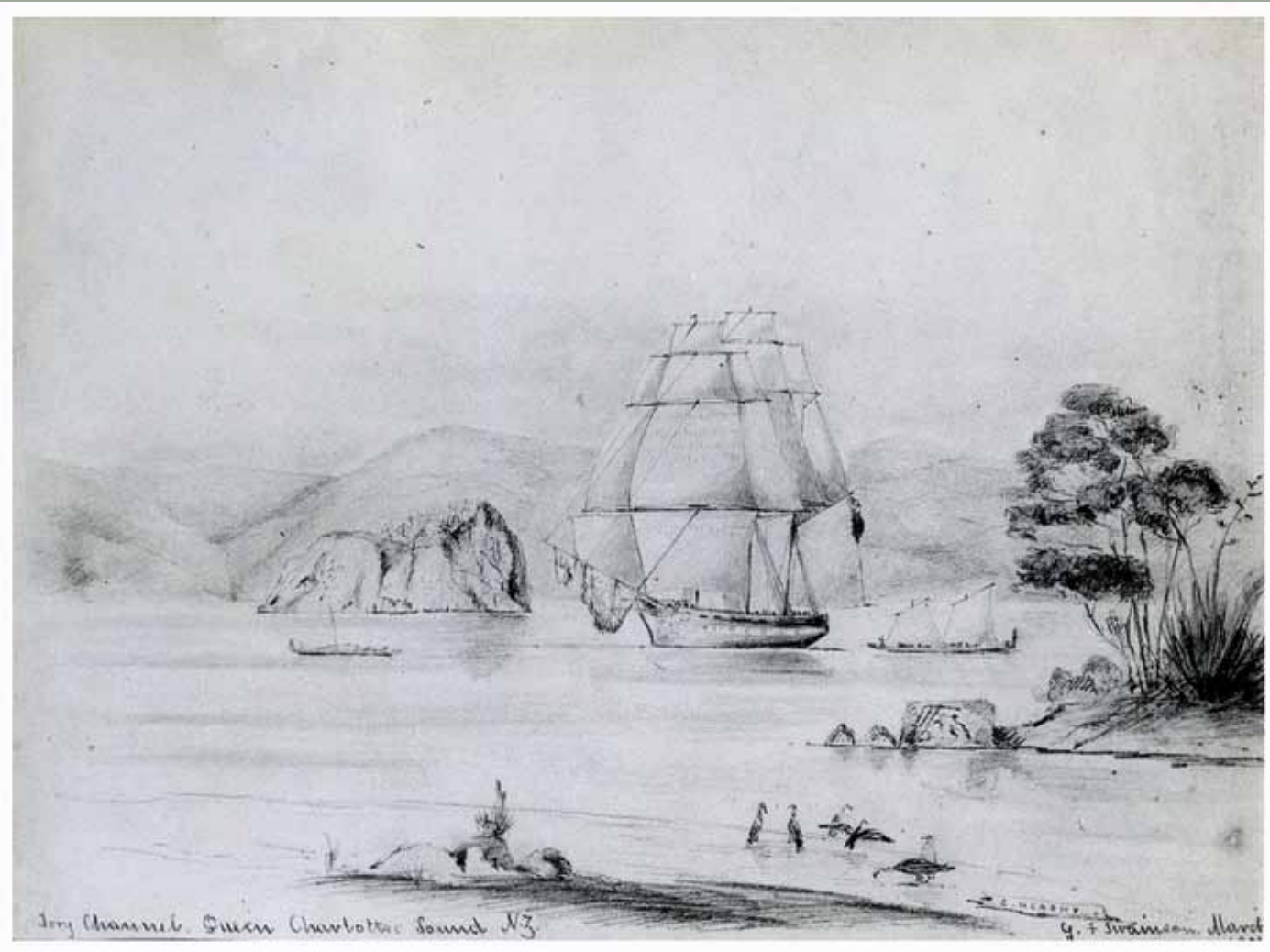
W investplymouth.co.uk

🐦 [@investplymouth](https://twitter.com/investplymouth)

🌐 [Economic Development@Plymouth City Council](mailto:EconomicDevelopment@PlymouthCityCouncil)

Britain's Ocean City is working to create the UK's first National Marine Park. It will celebrate our past and our future and encourage greater prosperity and enhanced engagement with our marine environment.





The emigrant ship *Tory* sailed from Plymouth, helping to found modern New Zealand.

Credit: Archives New Zealand from New Zealand - Ship in Queen Charlotte Sound, CC BY-SA 2.0

Heather Knight - captain of England's World Cup winning women's cricket team - is from Plymouth.





William Bligh, captain of the ill fated *HMS Bounty* was born and christened in Plymouth. Aged 22, he was appointed sailing master on *HMS Resolution*, serving under Captain James Cook on his final Pacific voyage.



Jacka Bakery on Southside Street is Britain's oldest working bakery and is the site of the bakery which is rumoured to have made the ship's biscuits for the *Mayflower*.



Plymouth born Tom Daley is one of Britain's youngest Olympians, he competed in three Olympic Games by the age of 23: Beijing, London and Rio de Janeiro. Tom has two Olympic medals to his name, Bronze in the 10m platform at London 2012 and another from Rio 2016 where he was awarded a Bronze in the 10m synchro alongside Dan Goodfellow.

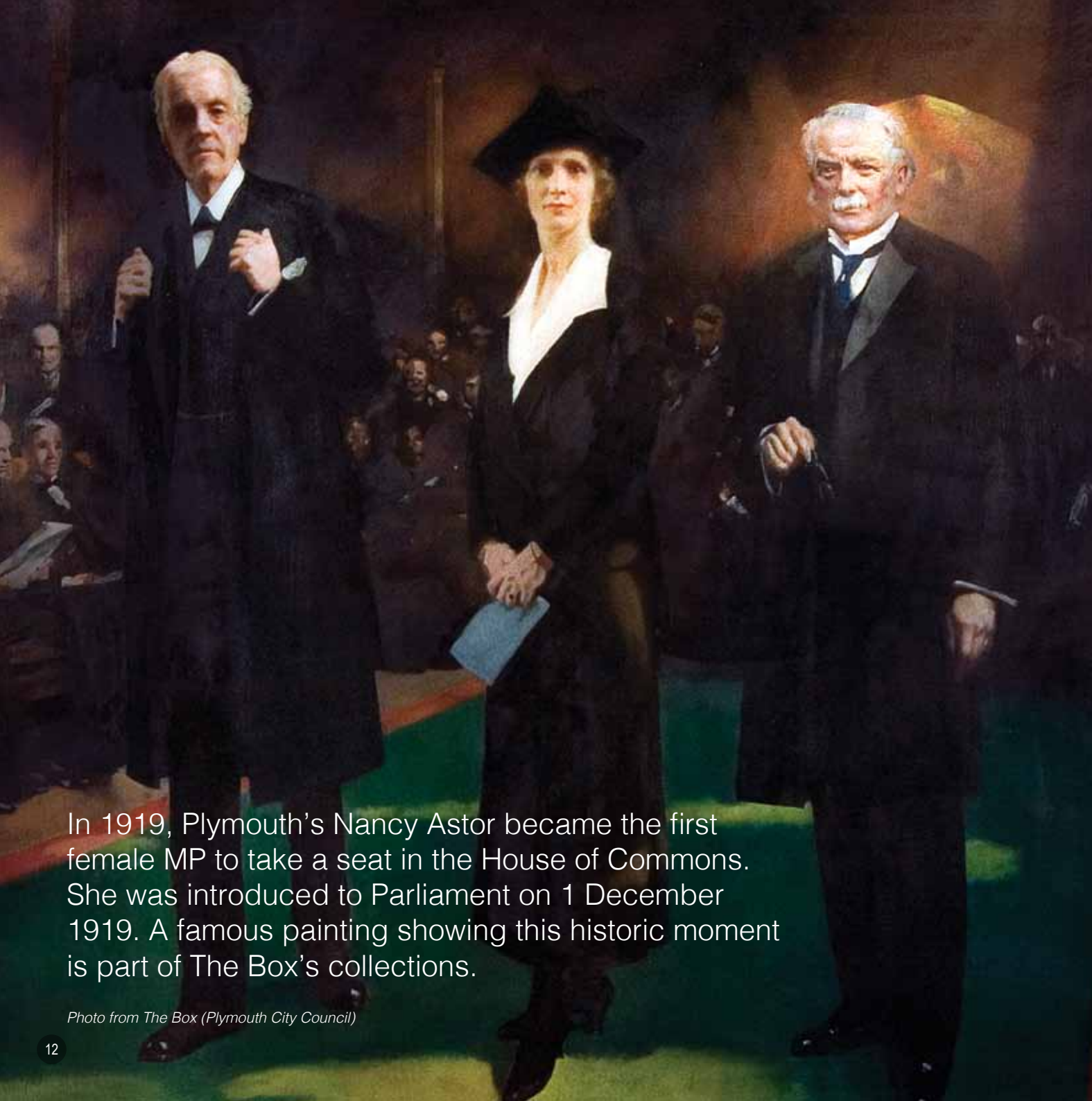
2,177,516 items and objects can be found in The Box. The smallest is a feather winged beetle, the size of a full stop and the largest is the figurehead King Billy, which is over 4 metres tall and weighs in at 2.5 tonnes. A replica currently guards the entrance to Devonport Naval Base, and the original has been restored and is on display in entrance to The Box.



There are 52 Plymouths across the globe, but only one original.

Plymouth's Art Deco Lido opened in 1935 and is regularly featured in national press as one of the finest places in the UK to swim.





In 1919, Plymouth's Nancy Astor became the first female MP to take a seat in the House of Commons. She was introduced to Parliament on 1 December 1919. A famous painting showing this historic moment is part of The Box's collections.

Photo from The Box (Plymouth City Council)



Scott of the Antarctic, who is still regarded as one of the top 100 Britons, was from Plymouth. You can see his skis and mittens on display at The Box.

Photo from The Box (Plymouth City Council)

Mine's a pint

Local legend has it that when the Tolpuddle Martyrs returned from Australia between 1837 to 1839 they stayed in the Dolphin Hotel on the Barbican.



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle assisted at a medical practice in Durnford Street. Sherlock Holmes was rumoured to have been based on his colleague there, Dr Budd.



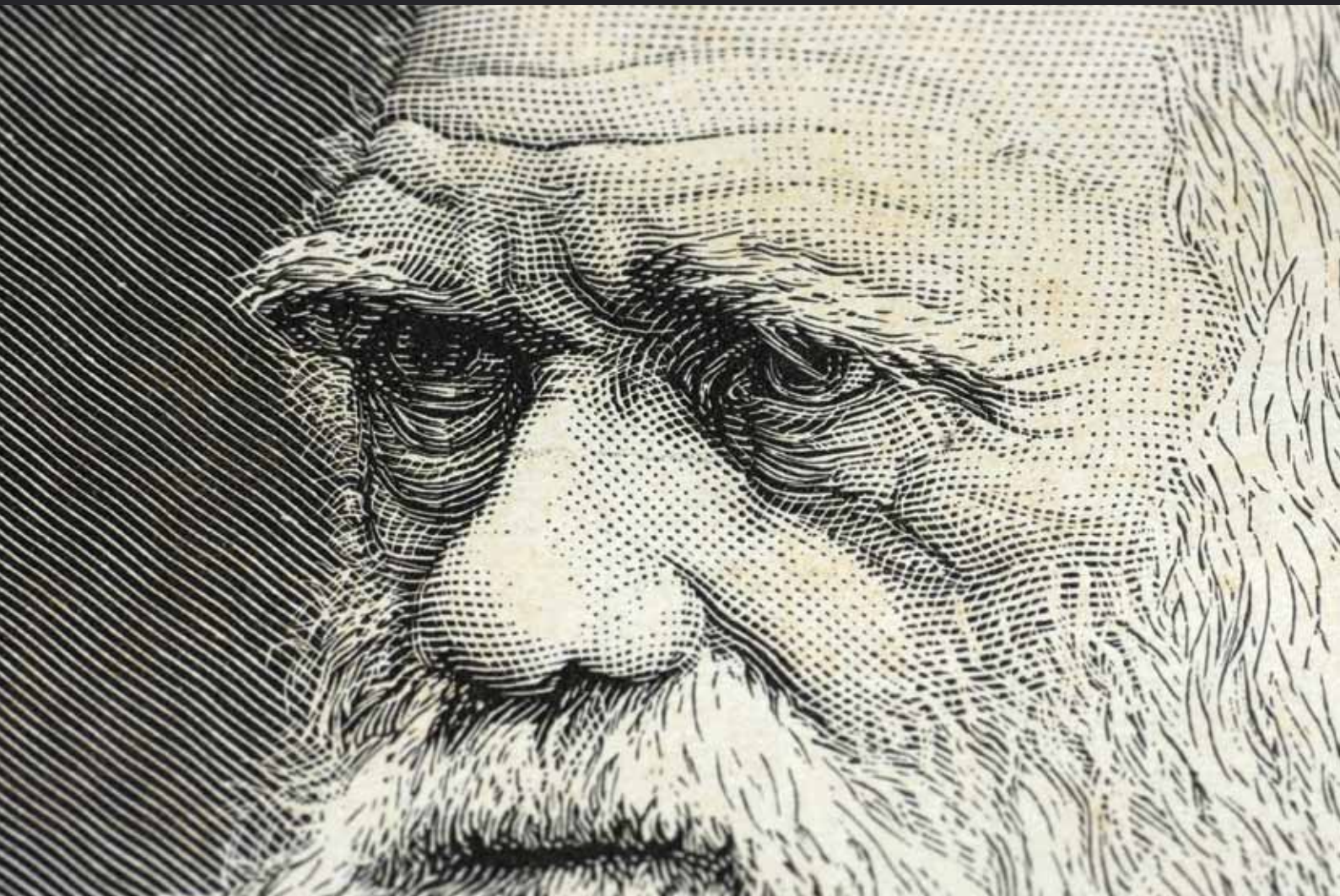
Plymouth has the oldest Ashkenazi Synagogue in continuous use in the English speaking world – it dates from 1762.



Sir Francis Chichester was the first person to sail single-handed around the globe starting in Plymouth in August 1966 and finishing 226 days later. The Box's 100 Journeys gallery features details of this momentous journey, including a film of his return to Plymouth.

Photo from The Box (Plymouth City Council)





Charles Darwin's voyage on HMS Beagle which helped confirm his theory of evolution set sail from Plymouth in December 1831. His adventures are celebrated in The Box's 100 Journeys gallery, along with the sextant he used on The Beagle.



Stanley Gibbons founded his famous stamp collecting business in Plymouth in 1840, the same year that the penny black stamp was launched.

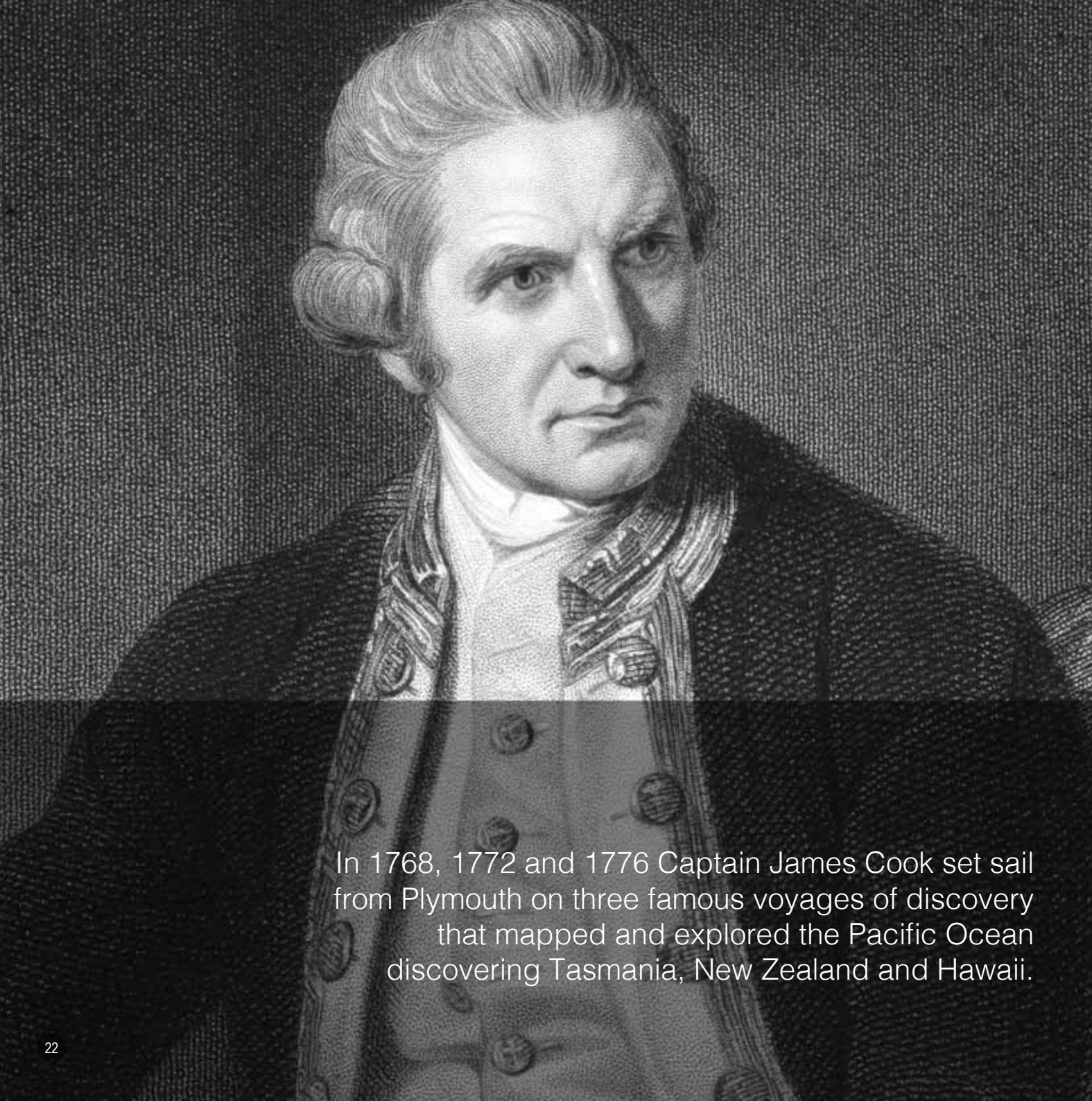
Plymouth born Michael Foot was editor of the Evening Standard before he was 30, at the forefront of Health and Safety Legislation and leader of the Labour Party.



Passport

In 1390 Plymouth and Dover became the two licensed English ports for pilgrims to travel to Spain. This enabled pilgrims to leave without obtaining special permission from the King.





In 1768, 1772 and 1776 Captain James Cook set sail from Plymouth on three famous voyages of discovery that mapped and explored the Pacific Ocean discovering Tasmania, New Zealand and Hawaii.



Plymouth has been the finish of the iconic 'Fastnet' race since it started in 1925.

HMNB Devonport

The Ministry of Defence and Babcock International work in partnership on this 330 acre site – the largest naval base in Western Europe with four miles of waterfront.





The popular artist Beryl Cook made her home in Plymouth.
Her recognisable paintings have featured on 1st class stamps.

Image: The Box (Plymouth City Council)

The Port of Plymouth Sailing Regatta is one of the oldest regattas in the world. It started in 1823.





Plymouth Gin travelled across the globe on Royal Navy ships. Navy Strength gin was given its name due to its high alcohol content, which means that even if the gin is spilt on gunpowder, the powder can still be lit.



Plymouth Gin's Black Friars Distillery on the Barbican is rumoured to be the place where the Pilgrims spent their last night before sailing on the Mayflower.



Sir Francis Drake circumnavigated the world in 1577, starting from Plymouth. It took him 3 years sailing against the tides and winds. The statue commemorating this voyage can be seen standing proudly on Plymouth Hoe. Drake's sword, globe and drum feature in The Box's '100 Journeys' gallery.



Photo from The Box (Plymouth City Council)

England Rugby star Henry Slade was born in Plymouth and started his career playing for Plymouth Albion before rising through the ranks to represent the country.





Endurance swimmer and UN Patron of the Oceans, Lewis Pugh, was born in Plymouth. Lewis was the first person to swim the length of the English Channel. He started at Land's End on 12 July 2018 and finished at Dover on 29 August 2018. The swim was 328 miles / 528 kilometres in length, and took 49 days.



The Pill

Herchel Smith, the ground breaking chemist whose research led to the development of the contraceptive pill, was born in Plymouth in 1925.



Thales opened the first UK Maritime Autonomy Centre in Turnchapel, Plymouth for the development, assessment and certification of autonomous technologies and platforms.

Credit: Heads Up Definition

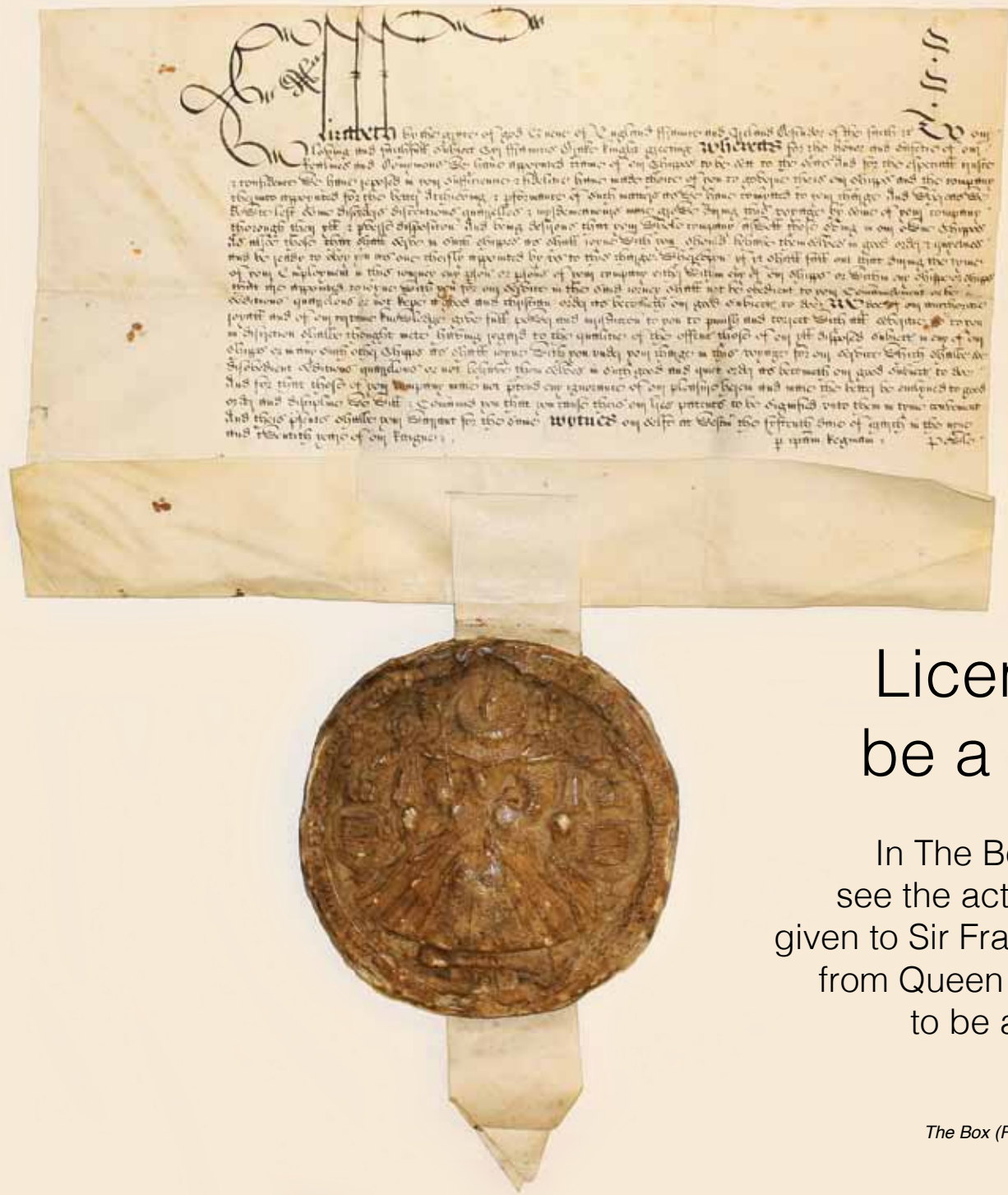
Oceansgate is the first Marine Enterprise Zone in the country. The former Ministry of Defence land was purchased by Plymouth City Council and developed into a business park for the marine and maritime industry.



Image: Trevor Burrows Photography



Many of the surviving crew of the Titanic were landed at Plymouth's Millbay Docks on their return from America. They had to give witness statements to the Board of Trade before being allowed to leave for home.



License to be a Pirate

In The Box you can see the actual license given to Sir Francis Drake from Queen Elizabeth I to be a Privateer.

The Box (Plymouth City Council)



Plymouth's Got Talent

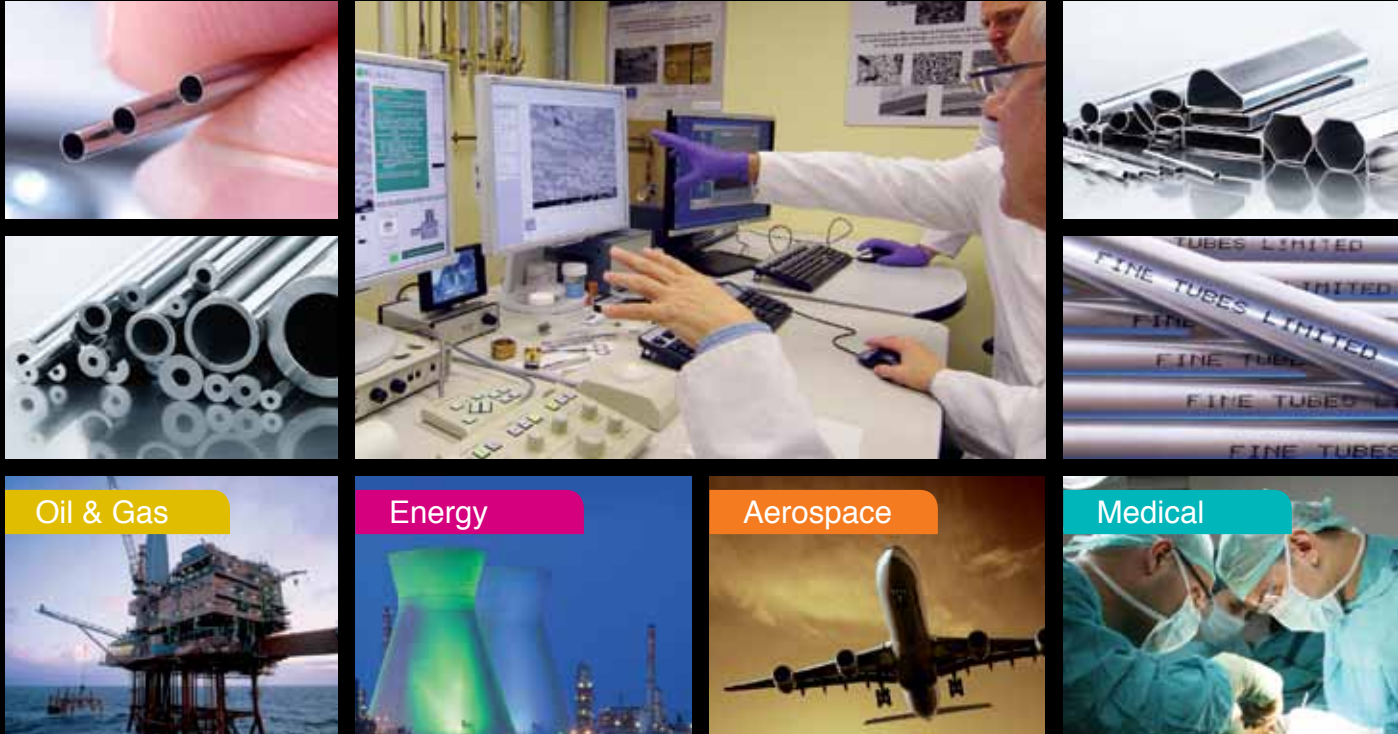
Plymouth is home to many well known celebrities including, Dawn French, Woody from Bastille and Joff Oddie, lead guitarist from Wolf Alice.

Royal William Yard is home to the largest collection of Grade I listed former Royal Naval buildings in the UK.



A fifth of the UK's power is delivered through tubes made at Fine Tubes in Plymouth.

Plymouth is home to Princess Yachts, who pride themselves on producing some of the world's most luxurious motor yachts and export to over 65 countries.





The National Marine Aquarium has the deepest tank in the UK. Their Atlantic Ocean exhibit holds 2.5 million litres of water. The Aquarium pumps and cleans around 50,000 litres of Plymouth seawater daily for its world class exhibits.



Award-winning ride on suitcases, Trunki, are made in Plymouth by Magma Moulding Limited using recycled products. The first UK made ride-on Trunki came sprinting off the Plymouth production line in 2012. Now rolling into its seventh year, Magma Moulding produce up to half a million Trunki suitcases a year.



The latest Trunkis - Flora the Fairy and Percy the Police Car



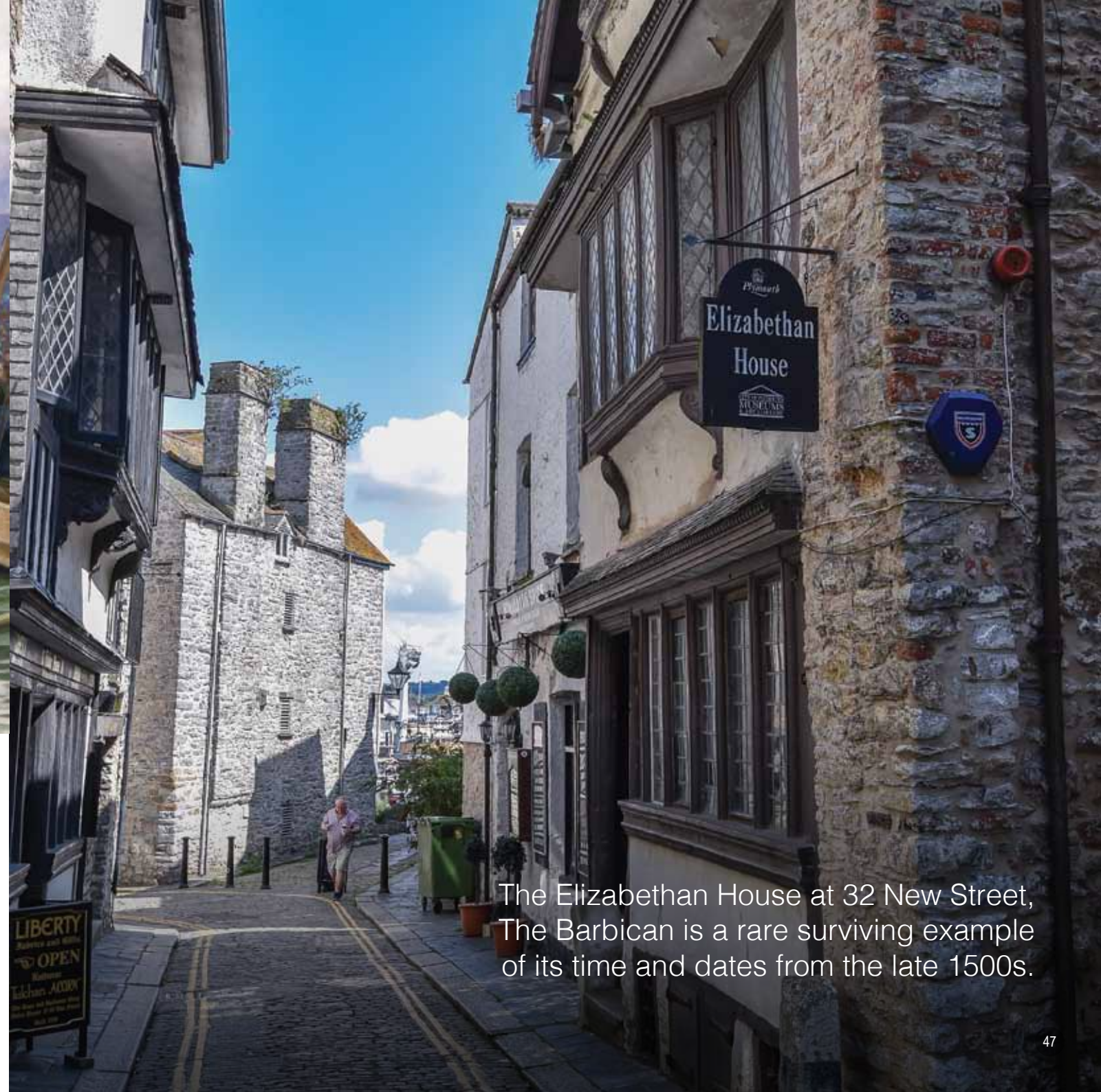
Opened in 1859, the Royal Albert Bridge over the river Tamar, designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, is regarded as an engineering marvel.



Smart Sound Plymouth is a globally unique concept providing world-class proving and demonstration facilities for cutting edge marine technologies.



Self-styled French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte was held captive on *HMS Bellerophon* in Plymouth Sound from 26 July to 4 August 1815.



The Elizabethan House at 32 New Street, The Barbican is a rare surviving example of its time and dates from the late 1500s.

The Box holds the UK's largest regional film archive of over 250,000 individual films, including the earliest film ever shown in Plymouth.



Plymouth boasts 1,500 'Gold Anchor' marina berths – Sutton Harbour Marina, Mayflower Marina, Queen Anne's Battery and Plymouth Yacht Haven.



Theatre Royal Plymouth is the South West's principal centre for performing arts, presenting a programme of world-class productions on all scales to well over 350,000 ticket buyers a year. It also runs a year-round engagement and learning programme that reaches thousands of people in Plymouth of all ages and from all backgrounds.



The team at Theatre Royal Plymouth's Production & Learning Centre created the iconic poppy sculptures Wave and Weeping Window by artist Paul Cummins and designer Tom Piper. Commemorating the First World War centenary, the sculptures have since visited 19 UK locations and been seen by nearly 5million people.



Plymouth has the highest concentration of manufacturing and engineering employment in the whole of the South of England.

Plymouth's pioneering Breakwater was known as the 'Great National Undertaking'. Conceived in 1806, work started in 1812.



Karen Friendship, Managing Director, Alderman Tooling Ltd

David McKee, the creator of Mr Benn and Elmer the Elephant, lived in Plymouth and was a student at Plymouth College of Art.



Mr Benn, Elmer © David McKee, published by Andersen Press



Plymouth Science Park is one of the largest science and technology parks in the country. It has the highest percentage of female-owned businesses across all UK science parks.

Plymouth is home to the OSTAR sailing race, which began life when a handful of British sailors made a bet to see if they could sail across the Atlantic to America single-handed and who could do it the fastest. Among them were Sir Francis Chichester and Blondie Hasler.

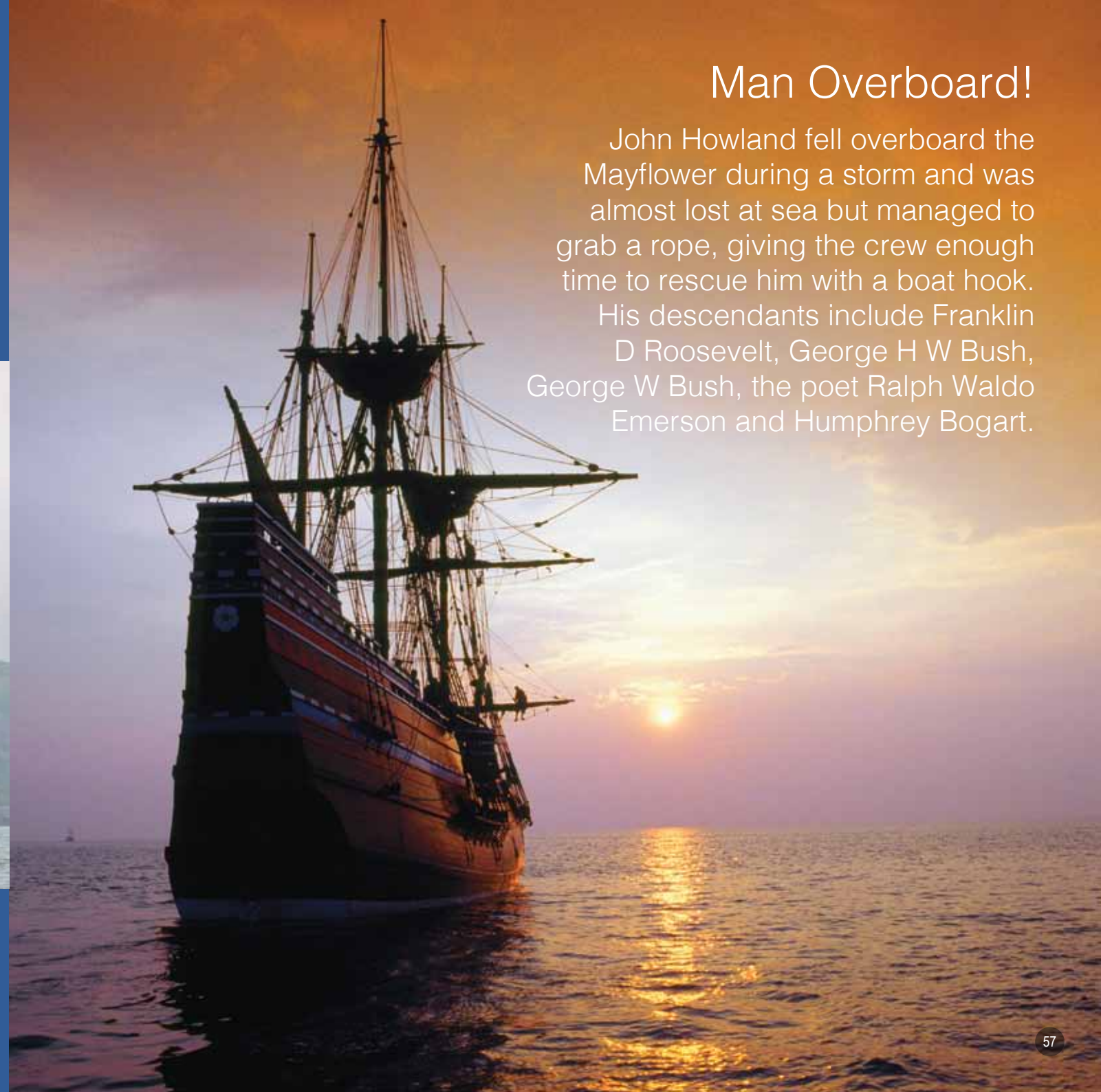


Photo: Paul Gibbins

Man Overboard!

John Howland fell overboard the Mayflower during a storm and was almost lost at sea but managed to grab a rope, giving the crew enough time to rescue him with a boat hook.

His descendants include Franklin D Roosevelt, George H W Bush, George W Bush, the poet Ralph Waldo Emerson and Humphrey Bogart.



University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust is the largest hospital in the peninsula, annually it sees around 500,000 outpatients, cares for 100,000+ patients on its wards and has over 100,000 attendances at its Emergency Department and Minor Injury Units. It is also the Major Trauma Centre for the region.



Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) has been based in Plymouth since 1995, it delivers through-life operational maritime training across all disciplines for the Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary as well as other Navies that wish to make use of its world class services.



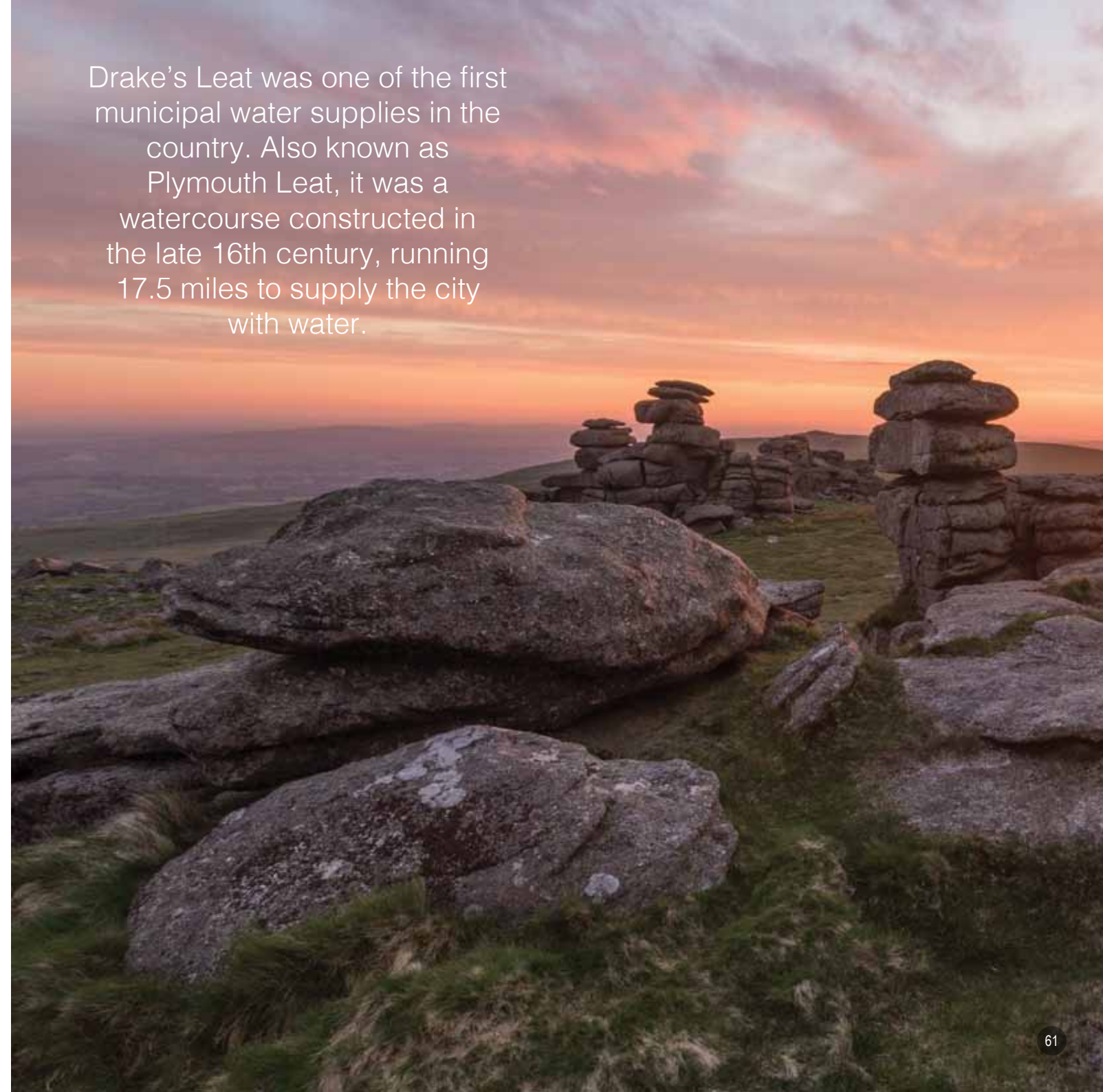
One in a million

Plymouth-born Trevor Francis was the first player to command a £1 million transfer fee in English football.



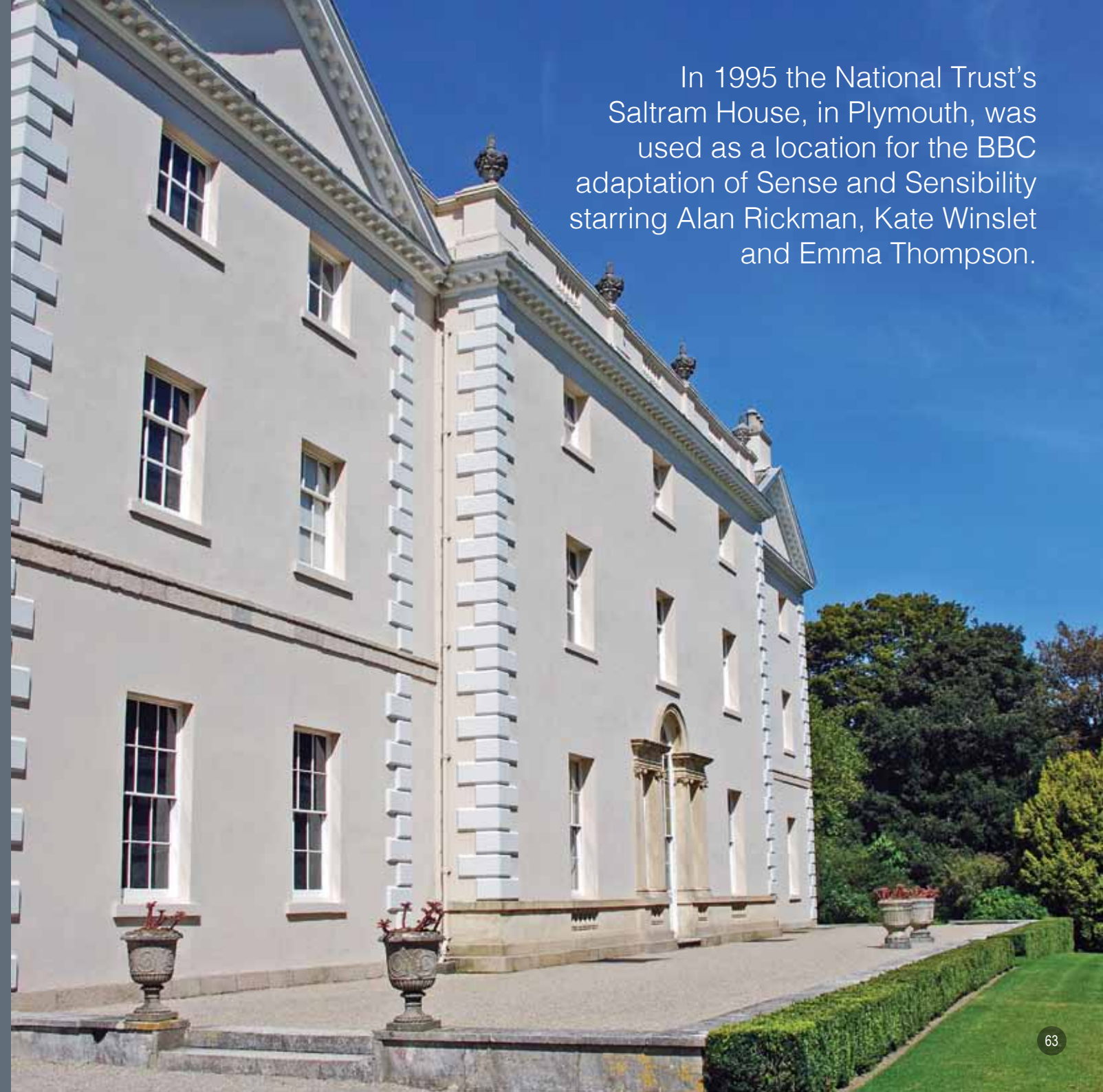
Photo from ColorSport.co.uk

Drake's Leat was one of the first municipal water supplies in the country. Also known as Plymouth Leat, it was a watercourse constructed in the late 16th century, running 17.5 miles to supply the city with water.





In 2007, whilst on patrol in Afghanistan, Plymouth Marine Mark Ormrod was injured by an Improvised Explosive Device (I.E.D) resulting in him becoming the UK's first triple amputee from the conflict. In 2018, he won four golds, one silver and two bronze medals at the Invictus Games in Sydney.



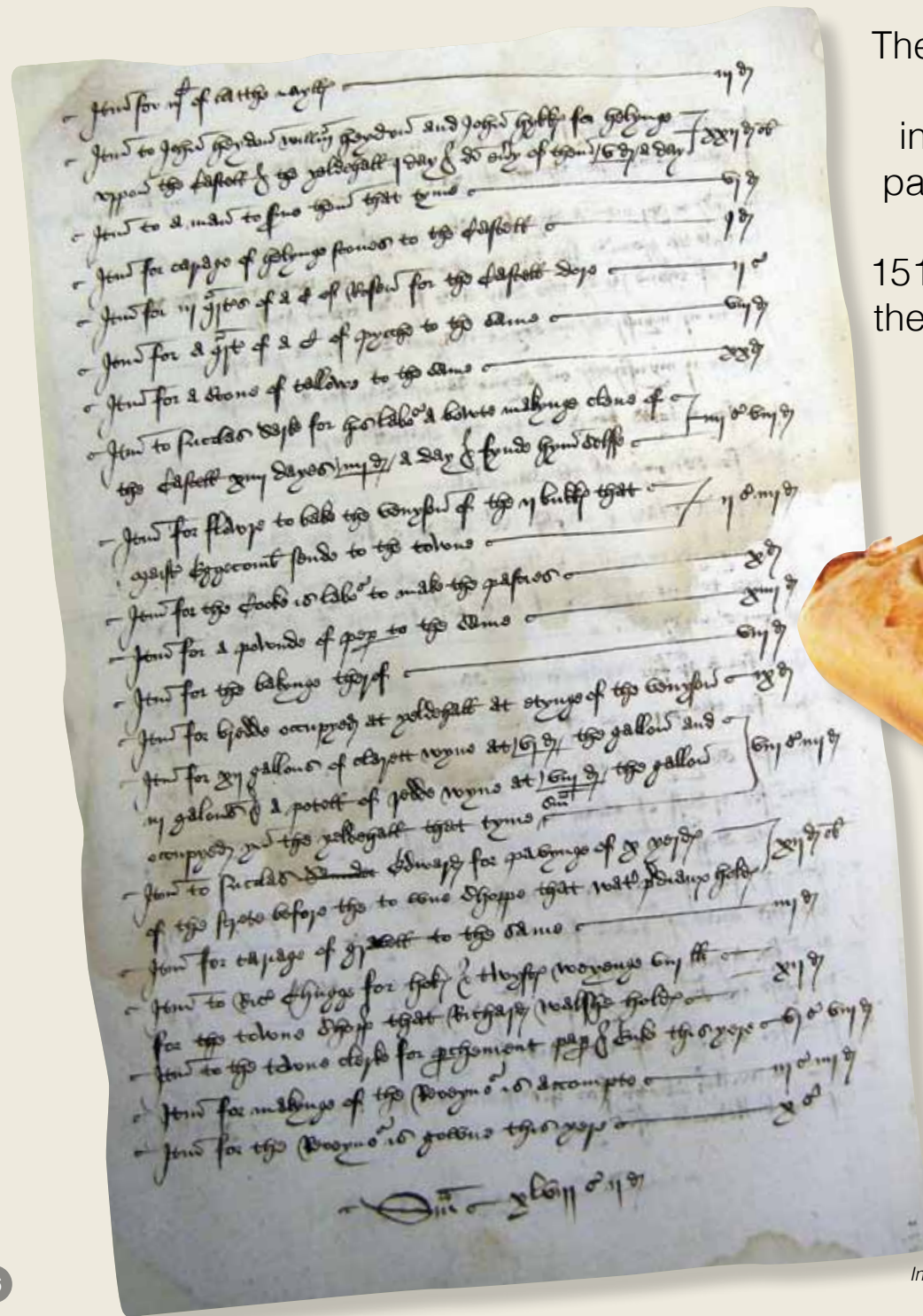
In 1995 the National Trust's Saltram House, in Plymouth, was used as a location for the BBC adaptation of Sense and Sensibility starring Alan Rickman, Kate Winslet and Emma Thompson.

The famous 20th century artist John Piper designed post-War stained glass windows for Plymouth's Minster Church of St. Andrew, as well as the new Coventry Cathedral.



The UK's most expensive bed at £75,000, the 'Diamond Majesty' was made by Plymouth company Vi-Spring.





The Box archive holds proof that Devon invented the Cornish pasty with the earliest recipe dating from 1510, hidden in one of the Plymouth Borough account books.



Maintained by Plymouth Marine Laboratory in partnership with the Marine Biological Association, the Western Channel Observatory is globally recognised for being one of the most comprehensive and longest shelf sea observatories in the world.

The immersive dome at the Market Hall in Devonport, built by the Real Ideas Organisation, is the first of its kind in Western Europe and is a cutting edge space for digital skills research, learning and development.



The music journalist, novelist and script writer David Quantick was born and brought up in Plymouth, he officially opened the Beatle Bums sculpture on the Hoe in 2016.



In 1608-9, William Parker, an Elizabethan merchant adventurer and one time Mayor of Plymouth was the owner of the historic Merchant's House on St Andrew's Street.



George Passmore (b. 1942) – one half of famous artist duo Gilbert and George – was born in Plymouth. They have garnered worldwide acclaim for their work and won the highly prestigious Turner Prize in 1986.

“Kiss me Hardy” are Nelson’s famous last words. Hardy was captain of HMS Victory at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 and, like Nelson, was regularly based in Plymouth.



John Macarthur (1767-1834) was the world pioneer of the woollen industry in 'Oz' but he had his roots in Plymouth. As a soldier he and his family sailed to Australia with the 'Second Fleet'. Choosing to settle on granted land, he introduced Spanish Merino sheep to Australia.



In June 2019, Plymouth became the largest UK city to be accredited with Plastic Free City status from the global environmental charity Surfers Against Sewage.

This followed a year of work towards Plastic Free status by partners on the Plymouth, Britain's Ocean City Plastics Taskforce, led by Environment Plymouth, since the city launched its Plan for Plastics. Over the year, 118 schools, community groups, families and individuals signed up to be Plastic Free Community Ambassadors and 102 local businesses signed up to be Plastic Free Pioneers. In addition, around 1,500 volunteers in Plymouth took part in either a beach clean or a litter pick.

Two of Ernest Shackleton's voyages of Antarctic exploration left from Plymouth's Millbay Docks. The ill-fated Endurance in 1914 and the Quest in 1921.



Plymouth has been the start and finish point for some incredible female sailing pursuits. From the starting point for Ellen MacArthur's record breaking single-handed monohull east-west crossing of the Atlantic, to the start and finish point of Asia Pajowska's circumnavigation of the globe single-handed and unaided. Record breaking yachtswoman Dee Caffari, who has sailed around the world six times, also has a link to Plymouth. She has competed in a number of races that have started or finished in Plymouth, including the Artemis Transat in 2008 and the Fastnet.

Established in 1997 as Burts Chips, the company has evolved to become Burts Snacks in 2019. Burts now employs over 300 people across two different locations, and has designed their production facilities to offer maximum efficiency minimising environmental impact.



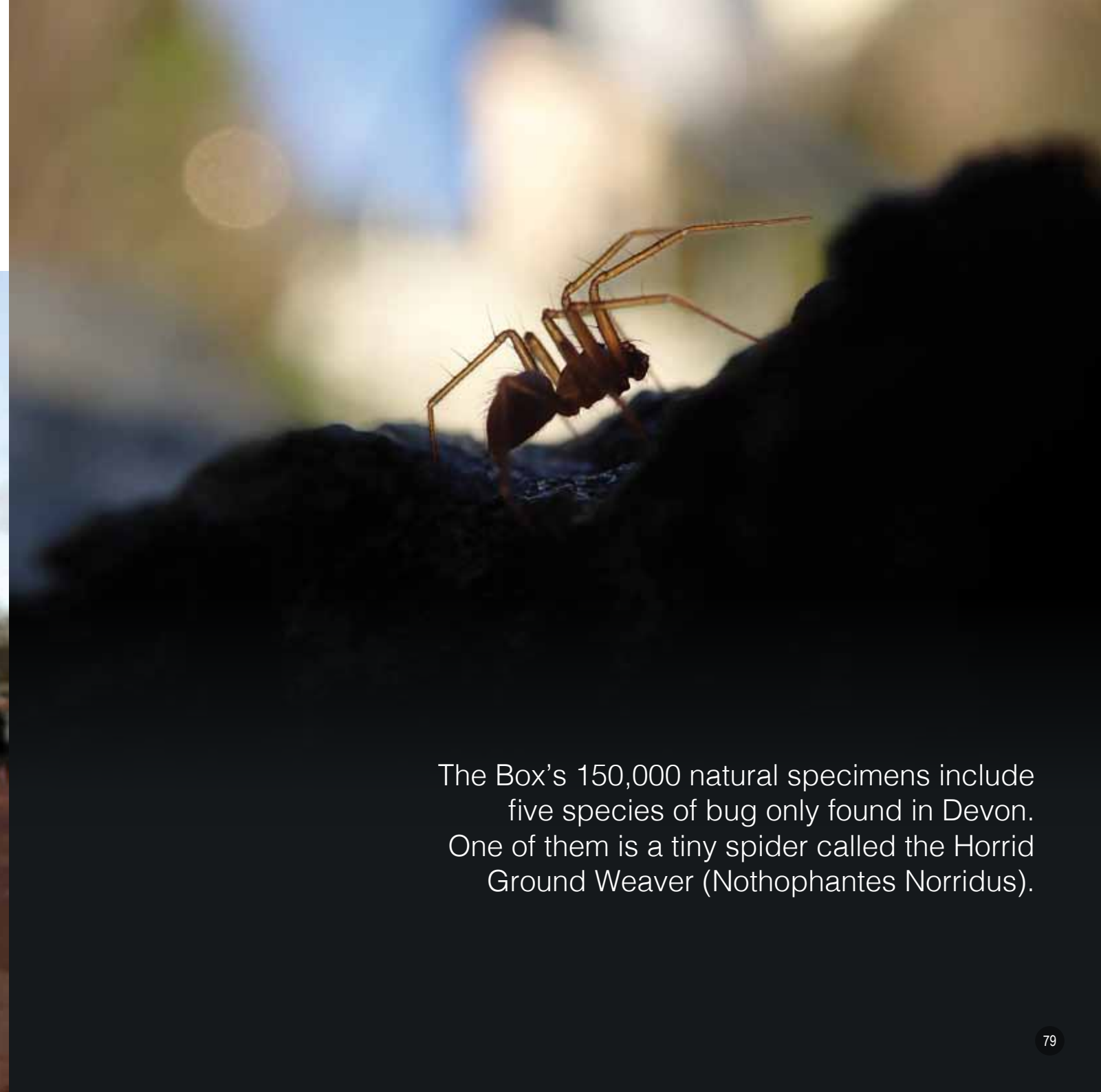
Burts Snacks has a passion for innovation and is on a mission to deliver quality snack products with exceptional taste and flavour. The company manufactures a range of hand cooked crisps, popcorn, compression-popped and flash-fried products from its state-of-the-art facilities in Plymouth and Leicester.

Burts Snacks export to over 30 countries worldwide.



Photo from Burts Snacks

For her operational tour in Afghanistan, including during an ambush on 12 March 2009, Plymouth born Kate Nesbitt (then aged 21) became the first female member of the Royal Navy, and the second woman in the British Armed Forces, to be awarded the Military Cross.

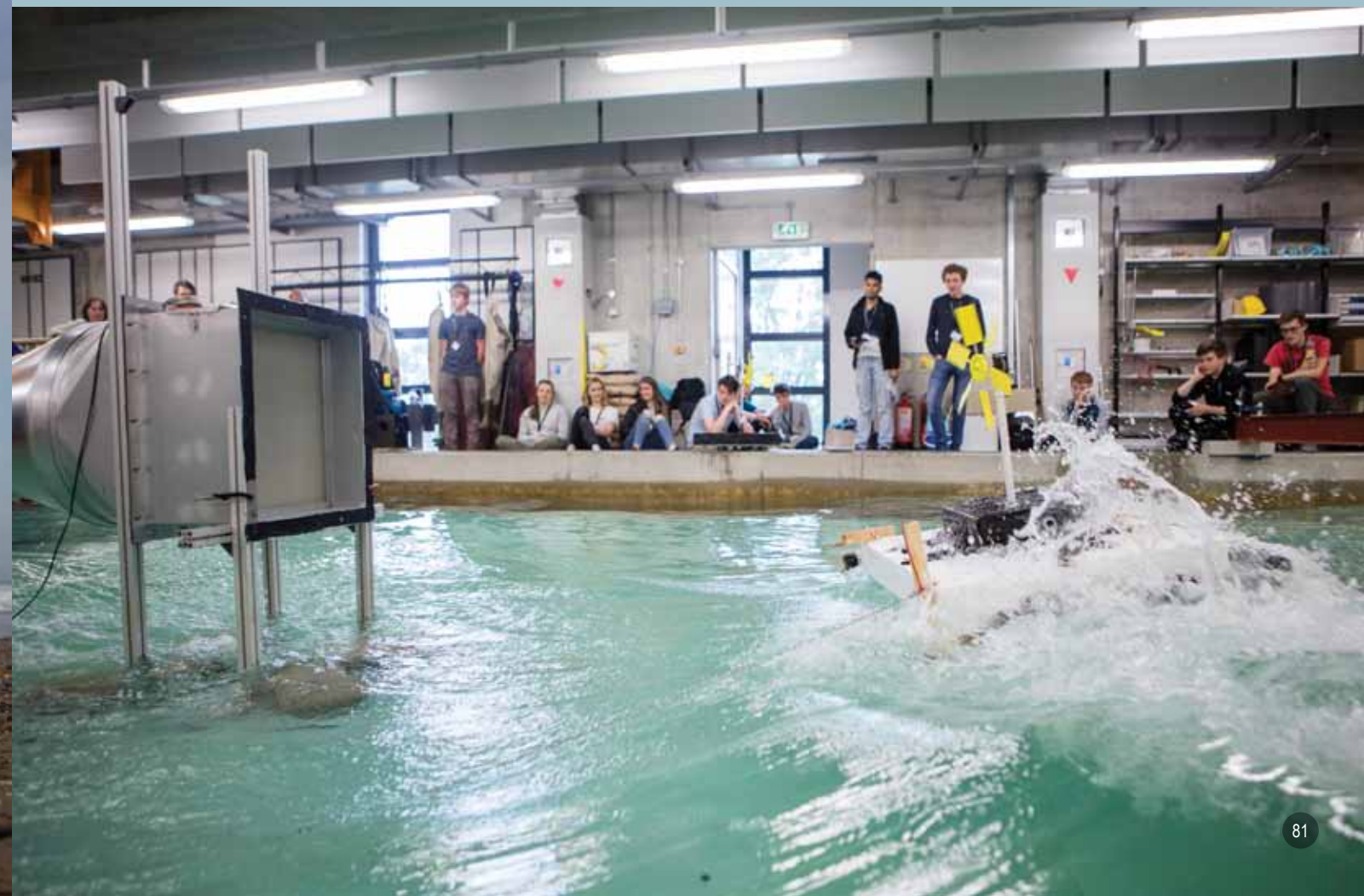


The Box's 150,000 natural specimens include five species of bug only found in Devon. One of them is a tiny spider called the Horrid Ground Weaver (*Nothophantes Norridus*).

The University of Plymouth's research into microplastics has directly influenced legislation in the UK, Canada and the European Union. Indeed, it was the only UK university to be cited by the government when it banned the use of microbeads in wash off cosmetics.



The University of Plymouth is the lead for the new Supergen Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Hub, a £5m national consortium bringing together a network of academic, industrial and policy stakeholders to champion and maintain the UK's world-leading expertise in the sector.



Plymouth's MDL Marinas is one of the trial locations for an innovative floating Sea Bin, designed to float in the water and tackle plastic pollution. The Sea Bin can annually capture 90,000 plastic bags, 35,700 disposable cups or 16,500 plastic bottles.



The floor area in Drake Circus The Barcode, the new cinema and retail complex for Plymouth, is the same as 34 tennis courts, and the Sky Bar has a floor height of approximately 30 metres from lower car park level - 8 metres taller than Smeaton's Tower.



Photo: McLaren

Plymouth Fish Market lands over 80 fish species, everything from whiting to anchovies. On average over 60 tonnes of fish are landed here everyday.



Sir Joshua Reynolds, famous portrait artist and founding President of the Royal Academy, was born in Plympton, near Plymouth on 16 July 1723. Several of his portraits are in The Box's collection.

In March 2019 the Theatre Royal Plymouth unveiled Messenger, the UK's largest bronze sculpture created by the artist Joseph Hillier. Messenger is 7 metres (23ft) tall, 9 metres wide (30ft) and weighs 10 tonnes.



Aggie Weston was a champion of sailors' welfare and set up the first Sailors Rest in Plymouth. She was the first woman to be given a full ceremonial Royal Navy funeral.



The Royal Citadel is home to 42 Commando and one of few star-shaped forts still working in the UK. It's one of only ten places in the UK that has permission to fire a 21 gun salute.



Opening the first store in 1989, Chris Dawson started the retail giant 'The Range'. With over 170 stores across the UK and Ireland, its global head office is in Plymouth at the flagship Derriford store.

The Barbican was one of the few quarters of the city to escape major damage during the Plymouth Blitz in the Second World War and has tight alleys flanked by Tudor, Jacobean and Georgian properties from 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.



There are more than 100 listed buildings on this labyrinth of cobblestone lanes!

Plymouth TV production company Denhams has produced every one of Rick Stein's BBC programmes, a production partnership that has spanned 26 years, 27 countries and three continents.



Plymouth City Council has won the Royal Town Planning Institute's top national award, the Silver Jubilee Cup, on three occasions for planning excellence – no other authority has won it more than once.



In 2018 and 2019, the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide ranked Plymouth Marjon University 1st in England for Teaching Quality. Did you know the word Marjon has been in use for almost 100 years?

Photo from the University of St Mark & St John



Plymouth has the highest number of post-war listed buildings outside London and is a unique example of a 20th century city.

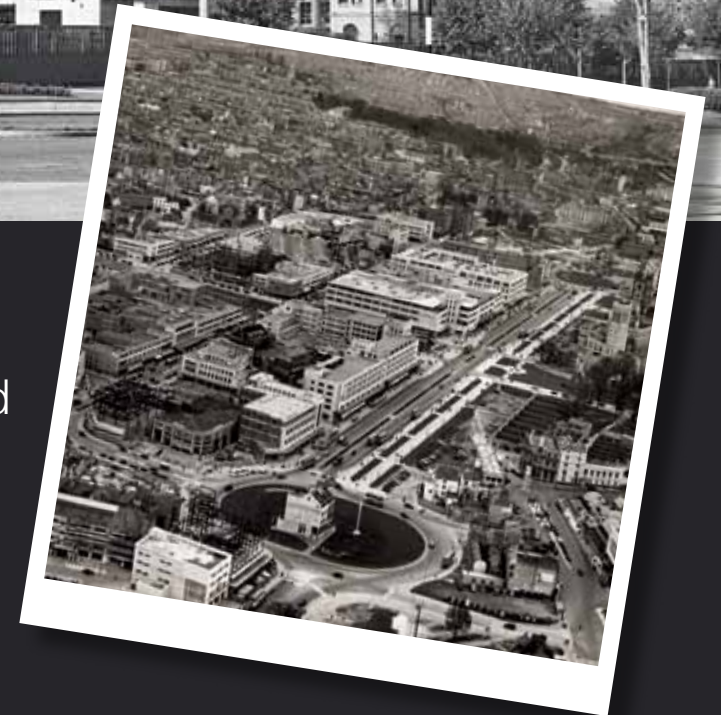


Photo from The Box (Plymouth City Council)

2020 marks the 400th anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower from Plymouth.

The Mayflower carried 102 passengers plus crew to America and took 66 days to cross the Atlantic.



The Box's 'Mayflower 400: Legend & Legacy' is the national Mayflower exhibition and the largest loans exhibition to ever happen in Plymouth.

It includes The Second Pierce Patent, which gave the passengers permission to settle in America and this has not been back to the UK since the ship sailed.



Most of The Box's collections are stored in an elevated 'archive in the sky' – the only one of its kind in the world. It features Europe's largest unsupported double cantilever and weighs more than 500 double decker buses. And you can have lunch under it.



In April 1849 Devonport Column was used for one of the world's first experimental demonstrations of electric light. Organised by Plymouth scientist John Nash Hearder, the light burned for three hours and with the help of a reflector, the light was said to be shining brightly enough to read a book almost 6km/3.5 miles away at Trematon Castle.

St Luke's Church, built in the 1820s, has been restored to become the largest contemporary art space in the South West.

As part of The Box, commissions include world renowned contemporary artists who have represented their countries at one of the world's most important art exhibitions, the 2019 Venice Biennale.

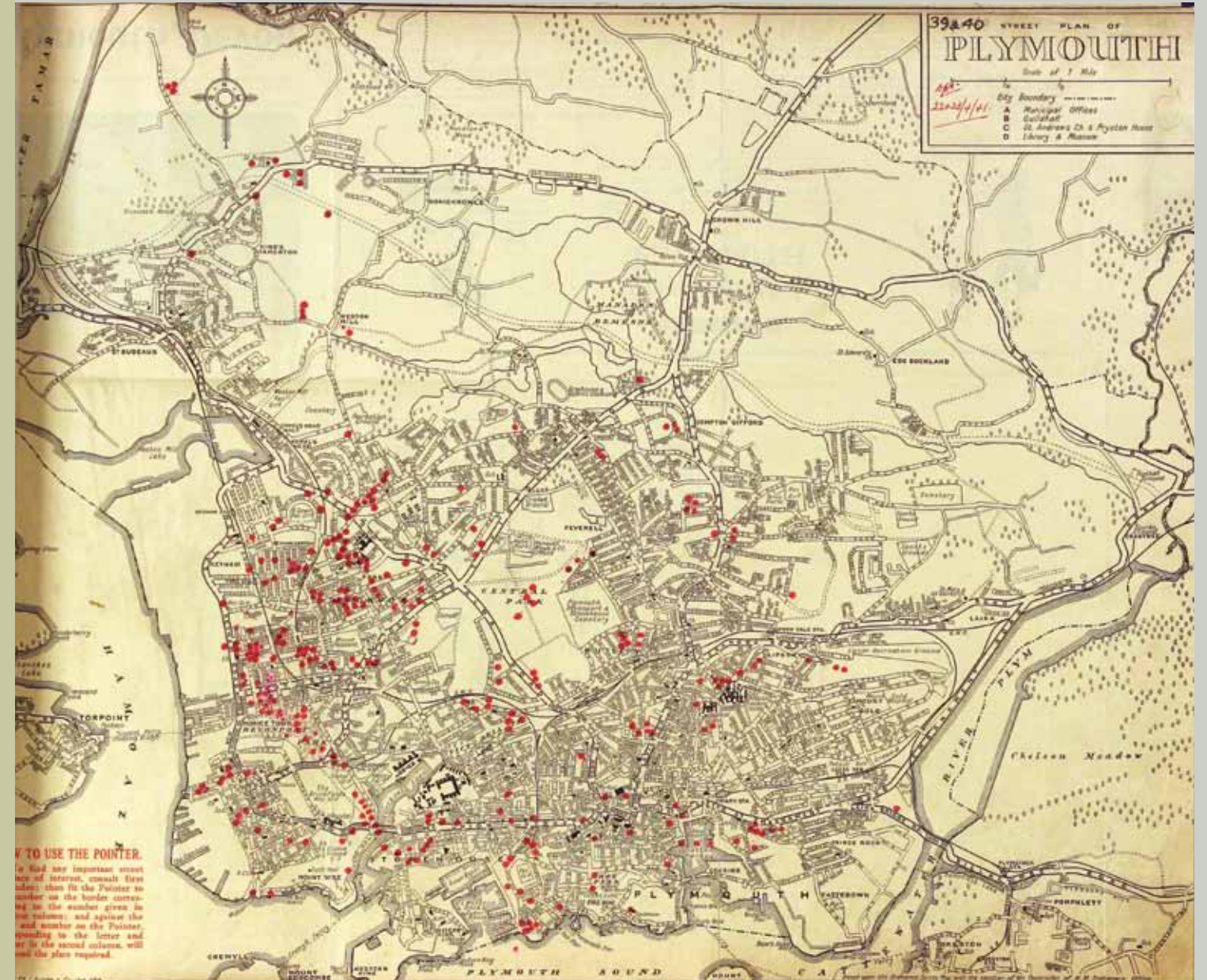
St Luke was the patron saint of artists!



The world's best known climate change campaigner, Greta Thunberg set sail from Mayflower Marina in Plymouth on 14 August 2019 for her historic - and gruelling - 15 day trip across the Atlantic on board the zero-carbon sailboat, Malizia II.



The Box now houses the South West Film & Television Archive, the largest of its kind in the UK. It also includes the actual Gus Honeybun puppet from Television SW.



In The Box's 'Active Archives' gallery you can see the Plymouth Bomb Book which evidences the most destructive raids on the city during the Blitz.

Image: The Box (Plymouth City Council)