

# Exploring the connected world



**Porthcurno**

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## WW1 Cable Wars centenary marked by Telegraph Museum lunchtime talk

Undersea cables are vital to global communications, and they were never more important than during wartime. So much so that these international connections became prime targets in the earliest days of World War I with many being violently attacked and even re-routed to enable eavesdropping. A lunchtime Ideas Cafe talk at the Telegraph Museum Porthcurno on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> November will mark the centenary of the cable wars, including the November 1914 attack on the Cocos Island cable station by the SMS Emden; known as the 'Kaiser's Pirate Ship.'

The island raid sparked the first Australian naval battle of WW1, but its primary objective was to disrupt critical telegraph communications. An axe used by the Emden crew to destroy the islands' cables is on display in the Telegraph Museum's exhibitions and forms part of Cornwall's only designated museum collection. Speaker Colin May will discuss two of these wartime attacks as well as the experiences of telegraph operators and their families who built their lives in remote and often exotic corners of the world.

Colin spent his career working with communications in the armed forces before joining an international electronics company specialising in electronic warfare. His interest in WW1 has led him to deliver a number of related talks at the Telegraph Museum Porthcurno as part of the popular Ideas Cafe programme which covers topics across history, science, technology and art.

Special tickets priced at £12.50 will give visitors the chance to enjoy the museum's new exhibitions as well as the Ideas Cafe talk, and includes a delicious lunch in the museum's new cafe. Tickets can be bought on the door on the day, or via Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ideas-cafe-presents-cable-wars-lunchtime-lecture-tickets-13986932291>

For more information see [www.porthcurno.org.uk](http://www.porthcurno.org.uk)

**ENDS**

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**Notes for Editors****About Porthcurno**

Porthcurno has a unique place in history: the undersea telegraph cables that linked Britain with the world come ashore at Porthcurno beach. The valley was the hub of international cable communications from 1870 to 1970, and was home to a training college for the communications industry until 1993. Porthcurno was the biggest and busiest cable station in the world.

The site was re-opened as a museum in 1998, housed in many of the original buildings of the cable station. Part of the museum's collection is displayed within the WW2 tunnels which were constructed to safeguard vital communications during wartime.

**Museum development**

The museum closed to the public in September 2013 to undertake its extensive redevelopment project; Developing for the Future. The project aims to transform the museum site to enable better access to its growing number of visitors. Phase one of the project; the development of a new flexible Clore Learning Space and a state-of-the-art archive facility; was completed in autumn 2013. Phase two of the development was completed when the museum re-opened in June 2014 with brand new exhibitions, a new museum cafe and improved facilities and access across the museum site.

Developing for the Future has been made possible by the generous support of the Arts Council England, the Charles Hayward Foundation, the Clore Duffield Foundation, the Coastal Communities Fund, Cornwall Council, DCMS/Wolfson Fund, the Edith Murphy Foundation, the Garfield Weston Foundation, the Headley Trust, Heritage Lottery Fund, ShareGift, SubOptic, the Trusthouse Charitable Foundation, and a number of generous individual benefactors. The museum is also extremely grateful to Cable & Wireless Communications and Vodafone for their ongoing support of the archive and the museum's educational programmes.