

# Friends' Newsletter and Magazine

October 2009

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## EDITOR'S LETTER

Dear Friend,  
Greetings and salutations.

As you thumb through this edition I hope that you will be agreeably surprised to find that there are 24 pages and not 20 as promised; it may well be that in the future we will have to revert to 20 but we shall have to await events for forthcoming editions. We have had to expand this edition due to the number of articles that have been sent to us. We are sorry that we have been unable to use them all but we will do our best to include them in future issues.

Inside you will find several articles that are what I loosely term as "scholarly", we shall be interested to have your observations. What is so very encouraging is that you, our readers, are taking the trouble to make and send contributions to us. You have obviously responded to our plea to subscribe to what after all is your newsletter and without your articles the newsletter would not be so pleasing and informative. It also occurs to us that you may well care to nominate a picture for the covers of the Newsletter, if so please get in touch and we shall give your choice our earnest consideration. In the last edition we published two splendid cover photographs presented and taken by a reader, Mr. David Watson James. These were received with acclamation. Maybe you too have a photograph to grace our pages, we will of course take great care of it. If you are spurred into activity for our next edition, may we remind you that it needs to be with us by the end of December 2009.

We are also most grateful to Mr Graham Davies who continues to send us articles from the Museum's website ([www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/rhagor](http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/rhagor)). These articles are shown by .

In two previous editions we published two fine articles: *When Welsh Ships Sail the Seas* and *Richard Trevithick's Steam Locomotive*. I fear that in neither article did we indicate the name of the author, who was Dr. David Jenkins, Senior Curator of Industry at the Department of Industry. We are truly sorry and we send our sincere apologies to Dr. Jenkins.

At the Celebrity Lecture several readers plucked my sleeve and said how much they enjoyed our choice of songs with which we close this introduction. Here is a classic which we hope will revive pleasant memories:

When they begin the beguine  
It brings back the sound of music so tender;  
It brings back the night of tropical splendour;  
It brings back a memory ever green.  
I'm with you once more under the stars  
And down by the shore an orchestra's playing,  
Even the palms seem to be swaying  
When they begin the beguine.  
Oh yes, let them begin the beguine, make them play

Till the stars that were there before return above you;  
Till you whisper to me once more, "Darling, I love you"  
And we suddenly know, what heaven we're in  
When they begin ---- the beguine!

This must be my all. Do please keep writing to us, we do so much appreciate your comments. Until we meet again,  
Bye bye

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## FROM THE CHAIRMAN ...

The newly-opened Oriel y Parc, Pembrokeshire Landscape Gallery at St Davids, represents a notably successful collaboration between Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority. Examples of Graham Sutherland's unique oeuvre form a permanent part of the exhibition which also features a rolling display of artwork from the collections of the National Museum. The landscape gallery concept might seem at first sight to denote a space devoted to 'pretty pictures' but - and it is made clear at Oriel y Parc - the displays embrace more than simply nature and rural scenes as the many layers of landscape in the broader sense comprehend physical, natural, cultural, and historical elements. Those who participated in the Friends' recent excursion to St David's were thus able, for example, to see works by artists as diverse as LS Lowry, the Fauvist Albert Marquet and Cedric Morris, besides of course Graham Sutherland whose longstanding connection with Pembrokeshire provides the *raison d'être* for the Gallery in the first place.

Oriel y Parc is an architecturally striking building, part of which is constructed underground, which includes a visitor centre and excellent self-service restaurant. The gallery conforms to the highest standards for the exhibition of fine art. All in all, St David's - with its fine Cathedral - is well worth a visit. A future edition of the Newsletter and Magazine will I hope cover the Oriel y Parc story in more detail.

I am sometimes asked why subscriptions to the Friends cannot be paid by direct debit. The answer is that the banks will not permit it in the case of smaller organisations so we remain stuck with the relative inconvenience of standing orders. Standing orders are however preferable

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### Cover illustrations

Frontispiece: British School, 17<sup>th</sup> Century, *Sir Thomas Mansel (1556-1631) and Jane, Lady Mansel* (Oil on canvas, 121 cm x 125 cm).  
 Backpage: Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769 - 1830), *Thomas Williams (1737-1802)* (Oil on canvas 127.5 x 102.1 cm).

We are grateful to the Museum for permission to publish these portraits and to Ms Clare Smith, the Collection Manager of the Art Department, who kindly arranged for us to reproduce them for our Newsletter.

to the payment of subscriptions annually as they save a lot of work for our Subscriptions Secretary. There do incidentally remain some Friends who despite reminders have still to amend their standing orders to reflect current subscription levels - £20 joint and £15 single. If in doubt - why not check yours?

At an art show opening the other day I had a somewhat bizarre conversation with an acquaintance who for whatever reason had the impression that I was a boxing aficionado. Having confessed that Big Fight Night Live on ITV 3 was not a programme I had ever seen, my limited knowledge of the noble art quickly exhausted our possibilities for dialogue on the subject. The episode reminded me of an anecdote about the irascible philosopher and historian Isaiah Berlin who found himself plied with questions about musicals by a fellow guest at a No 10 Downing Street dinner, who mistook him for Irving Berlin, composer of *I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas* and numerous Broadway scores including *Annie Get Your Gun*. Given the well known self-regard of the philosopher, who once described Einstein as 'foolish', one can well imagine his perplexity!

Roger Gagg

## COVER STORY

We have chosen two fine pictures from the Museum's collection for the front and back covers in the firm belief that they will give you, our readers, a great deal of pleasure.

The front page is a portrait of Sir Thomas Mansel and his wife Jane. The Mansels of Margam were one of wealthiest families in South Wales. Thomas Mansel (1556-1631) was MP for Glamorgan. Often at the court of James 1, he bought a baronetcy in 1611. Husband and wife are touchingly shown holding hands in the painting of about 1625. The marigold held by Lady Mansel is perhaps a symbol for their daughter Mary. The picture was purchased by the Museum in 1984.

On the back page appears a portrait of Thomas Williams (1737-1802) painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence. From 1785 Thomas Williams was the chief agent of Mynydd Parys copper mines near Amlwch. He was a leading figure in the early Industrial Revolution and this portrait depicts him at the height of his power during the 1790s. It was hung at his country seat in Berkshire and purchased by the Museum in 1987.

Philip Lee

## GERALD OF WALES

Frank Lane

In 1176, a contemporary wrote that “*The Crusaders have forgotten God, and God has forgotten the Crusaders*”. This certainly seemed the case when in 1187 Jerusalem fell to Saleh-ad-Din, and it was to his credit that there was nothing remotely akin to the slaughter that had accompanied the fall of the city to the first Crusaders in 1099.

The fall of Jerusalem led to the Third Crusade which was preached in England and Wales by Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury and he was accompanied on his journey through Wales in 1198 by the Archdeacon of Brecon, Gerallt Cymro, or Giraldus Cambrensis, whom we now call Gerald the Welshman. Gerald was born at Manobier in Pembrokeshire in about 1135, and he rhapsodises his birthplace when he describes Pembroke as “*the most attractive province of Wales*” while “*in all the broad lands of Wales, Manobier is the most pleasant place by far*”. He mentions his “*tiny dwelling place*” and how he lives there “*in a sort of happy-go-lucky mediocrity*”.

Gerald was truly a man of his time. His great grandfather was Rhys ap Tewdwr, Prince of South Wales, whose daughter Nest married a Norman, Gerald of Windsor. Our Gerald was the son of their fourth child Angharad, the only daughter of that marriage; she married another Norman, William de Barri, a man whose family name survives at Barry near Cardiff. By the time he was thirty, Gerald was Archdeacon of Brecon in the diocese of St. David’s, where his uncle was Bishop.

Before 1188 Gerald had spent two very long periods of study in France. On his return to England he was ap-

pointed a Court Chaplain to Henry II and the next year accompanied Prince John to Ireland, remaining there for a year and writing his *History and Topography of Ireland*. This strange mixture of legend, history and comment was dedicated to Henry II. Although it has been heavily criticised, Professor J. O’Meara has pointed out that without it “*our knowledge of Ireland in the 12<sup>th</sup> century would be much the poorer*”. It was almost certainly read by Archbishop Baldwin who, in 1188, came to Wales and was accompanied by Gerald. Wendy Hughes in an article in the August 2001 issue of *Saints and Martyrs of the Catholic Church* (pp14 and 15) writing of the church at Patrishow in the Grwyne Fawr valley, tells us that tradition claims that

Baldwin preached the Crusade standing in front of the churchyard cross, which still exists.

Gerald wrote over twenty works which, when published in the Rolls Series from 1861 to 1891, took up eight volumes but the work known as *The Journey Through Wales* which describes his travels as Baldwin’s companion, and the *Description of Wales* are probably of the greatest interest to us in Wales. In many ways Gerald, who wrote in Latin, was a tidy author. He wrote a Preface in which he states the intentions of his writings; he then introduces his work with a list of chapter headings and unlike many modern historians, he kept fairly consistently to these plans. In his journey with Baldwin, Gerald gives us a view unrivalled in the Middle Ages – he had an eye for detail as well as an almost unbelievable facility of his day, to follow a long factual or descriptive passage with an equally serious account of the inconsequential, the unbelievable or the impossible.



Henry Poole, (1873-1928), *Giraldu Cambrensis* (Marble, life size). City Hall Cardiff.

Nicholas, in his *History and Antiquities of Glamorgan* (1874) compares some of Gerald’s descriptions with those given of the same places in 1660, when the Duke of Beaufort made his ‘Progress’ through parts of Wales, finding much unchanged. Indeed it would be very unusual to find any serious history of the period that does not

quote Gerald, for his actual facts are usually full and well-expounded.

But Gerald was more than an itinerant cleric keeping a record of his journeys. In parts of his work a religious fundamentalism comes through that points to a man of religious principles who could easily be offended by those who fell from standards he felt were expected of them. Another aspect of his character comes through to us when he defends himself from any suggestion that he “*should not squander on such insignificant themes the gifts which God has given me*”; adding a reference to “*princes who ....are so tight-fisted ....and refuse to ....reward work of great literary merit*”.

The opening of Book II of *The Journey* gives away what was a major element of Gerald’s life. He refers to St. David’s that “*once it was also the metropolitan city of an Archbishop*” and had earlier called it “*the metropolitan see of the country*”. There is no reliable evidence that St. David’s was ever an archbishopric but there is ample evidence that Gerald yearned for St. David’s to be recognised as a metropolitan see, thus liberating the Church in Wales from the authority of Canterbury, something for which Welsh Anglicans had to wait until after World War I. It has been suggested that the reason Gerald did not become Bishop of St. David’s in 1176, after the death of his uncle, was that Henry II remembered too painfully the death of Becket, less than six years earlier, and may have seen in this young Gerald some of the religious fervour of the Archbishop. However, the fervour that can lead to martyrdom never seems to be present in Gerald, when, for instance, Archbishop Baldwin did not seek to rectify some matters in a parish through which they passed, Gerald did not feel called upon to do so himself.



St David’s Cathedral.

He was consistent in his desire for St. David’s and it the existence of this consistency that leads one to believe his aim was independence from Canterbury. He refused the dioceses of Bangor and Llandaff and fought hard but unsuccessfully for St. David’s when it became vacant in

1198. When the See was filled in 1203, he resigned his Archdeaconry and slowly departed from the public scene, dying in 1223.

Gerald’s writings remain for us and, through them, we glimpse vivid pen pictures of contemporary society, two of which stand out. The first is the opening description of his visit to Llandaff: “*The English stood on one side and the Welsh on the other; and from each nation many took the cross*”. Nicholas suggests that this showed “*a sharp line of race distinction*” and it is easy to stand at Llandaff today, to visualise it as it was then, and to imagine the two separate audiences, with the Archbishop speaking first to the English, and the Welsh, many of whom may not have understood a word, waiting for a similar sermon to be given by one of Baldwin’s companions. Certainly not by Gerald, for one cannot help feeling that if such had been the case, he would surely have told us. Nowhere does he write of his Welsh and records held at Usk Castle indicate that the Archdeacon of Bangor “*acted as interpreter for the Welsh*”.

The second pen picture is his account of the penetrating power of a Welsh arrow, when he describes in tones of almost disbelief how arrows had penetrated “*the oak doorway of the tower, which was almost as thick as a man’s palm*”. And, with typical attention to detail, he goes on to describe the Welsh bow. In *The Description*, he also pays tribute to the fighting quality of the Welsh. However, he later goes on to describe in detail how they would be conquered, stressing the need for continuous assault, making the point that the Welsh were so few that they could not afford the drain of constant casualties, whereas “*an army of English mercenar-ies*” could withstand such losses. One cannot help wondering if Edward I read *The Description*, for the tactics he employed in his conquest of Wales are remarkably close to Gerald’s proposals. The reader is left with the feeling that, if Gerald was the first Welsh religious nationalist, he was certainly not a political nationalist. But what remains is an aura of goodness about this man, who, to the end of his days, was true to his beliefs and stands more than head and shoulders above his contemporaries.

### Further reading

For those interested in learning more about Gerald try *Gerald of Wales: The Journey Through Wales/The Description of Wales* by Lewis Thorpe (Penguin, 1978, reprinted in 1988). Penguin also published Professor John O’Meara’s *Gerald of Wales: The History and Topography of Ireland* (1982, reprinted 1985).

A full list of Gerald’s works is in the *Rolls Series* (London, 1861 – 1891).

## ★ DRAWN FROM NATURE: BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATIONS

**Mankind has always been fascinated by flowers, by their beauty, and by their possibilities for healing and knowledge. Amgueddfa Cymru holds a unique collection of over 9,000 botanical illustrations spanning five centuries.**

The collection comprises work ranging from professional engravings to amateur watercolours, and includes several items by acknowledged masters such as Georg Dionysius Ehret and Pierre Joseph Redouté. The collection traces the development of botanical illustration and its relationship between art and science from the medieval herbals of the Dark Ages, when man feared nature, through the Enlightenment and the great voyages of discovery to the contemporary illustrations of the 21st century.

After a small exhibition at National Museum Cardiff in 1942, the illustrations were put into store. Fifty years later the breadth and significance of the collection was rediscovered and their exquisite draughtsmanship fully appreciated.

### Floras

By 1600, after the early woodblock herbals, the process of engraving on metal allowed a finer delineation of every minute detail, revolutionising botanical illustration. *Flora Londinensis* (1777-87) by William Curtis is one of the most famous British floras listing all the plants within a ten-mile radius of London. An important early 19th century European flora is the *Flora Danica* (1763-1885), which took almost a hundred years to complete.

In the 17th century, plants were grown for their beauty as well as practical and scientific use. The wealthy produced 'florilegias' illustrating the rare and beautiful plants on their



Robert Thornton. *Tulipa gesneriana*, (Hand-coloured engraving, 57cm x 46cm) from Temple of Flora (1799).

estates, while scientific guides were full of precise illustrations from a whole range of plants. So-called 'Tulipomania' rose from the passionate desire of the wealthy to own the rarest plants. In Holland, a single tulip bulb was bought for 4,600 florins, plus a coach and a pair of dappled greys.

The collection contains many original prints from the 17th century, including work by Redouté, Sowerby, Fitch and the Welsh-born Sydenham Edwards.

### The introduction of taxonomy

In 1753 the Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus developed a new system of naming and classifying all living things. Everything was given two names in Latin: a genus name and a species name. This had a profound impact on the style of botanical illustration. Emphasis was now on the plant's sexual organs - much to the alarm of polite society.

The acceptance of the new Linnaean system was helped, in part, by the high quality of illustrations produced by G. D. Ehret at that time. The Museum holds illustrations by Ehret from *Plantae Selectae* (1750-73) and also a collection by J. S. Miller from Bute's *Botanical Tables* (1785), commissioned by John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute.

The collection also includes works by Redouté, Kirchner and Elizabeth Blackwell. Blackwell illustrated a herbal entitled *A Curious Herbal* to free her husband from incarceration in a debtor's prison.

### Voyages of discovery

Botanists accompanying the epic voyages of discovery in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were the first to record and collect the exotic plants encountered in the remote uncharted lands. For the first time Europeans saw pictures of exotic fruits such as pineapples, paw-paws and pomegranates. Many of the exotic fruits such as the paw-paw (papaya), a native of tropical America, quickly became fashionable in Europe. Examples in the collection include *Banks' Florilegium* and works from *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*.

### Victorian enthusiasm

The Victorians brought about an immense enthusiasm for science. Engravings of newly introduced plants became widely available through journals and popular magazines, such as *Carter's Floral Illustrations* and *Paxton's Floral Garden*.

With the discovery of *Victoria regia*, the giant water lily from the Amazon, there was much rivalry between the gardeners of the stately houses of England as to who would be first to induce it to flower in Britain. Joseph Paxton, the gardener at Chatsworth, won the race. It is said that the structure of the huge leaf inspired his design for the Crystal Palace.

**Maureen Lazarus and Heather Pardoe.**

## FRIENDS' NEWS

### May in the Derbyshire Dales

We are sad to report that the three night excursion into the Derbyshire Dales at the end of May is the last one to be organised by Hefin Looker; we do hope he will continue to enjoy outings and events devised by other members of the committee. As usual all arrangements ran on oiled wheels including the weather - we had sunshine and a warm breeze over the whole weekend.

Of special interest was the visit to the Sitwells' family home Renishaw Hall near Sheffield, barely two miles from the M1 motorway. Not too long ago it might have seemed like an oasis surrounded by industrial development but the coal fields and iron works have now gone, and its surroundings are greener than ever.

Sitwells appear very early in local records, for example a Simon Sitwell is recorded in a lawsuit of 1301 and in 1310 a Roger Cytewelle became one of the founders of the Guild of St. Mary of Eckington. The first family member to be described as 'of Renishaw' was George Sitwell born in 1600. The house is rather grim and Gothic in appearance but our guides provided both an educational and entertaining tour of the rooms prior to an excellent lunch. The garden as seen today is essentially the one designed by Sir George Sitwell between 1886-1889. However, records as early as 1260 mention *'the court of Reynaldeschawe and the gardens'*. For most of us there was little time to see the parkland and gardens but the glimpses we had were sufficient to tempt a return.

Excursions to much grander estates came later, each one reflecting rather different perspectives of the same family. Chatsworth for example evoked a feeling of a family business bent on survival in a world vastly different from the time of the first owners Elizabeth (Bess) Hardwick and Sir William Cavendish who had paid £600 for the manor in 1549. Today there are huge car parks, efficient means to ensure visitors see, spend and enjoy the house tour, shops, restaurants, gardens and picnics.

Hardwick Hall is rather different. The house almost shouts in pride of the wealth and status that Bess had acquired during a life of relatively humble beginnings that advanced through four judicious marriages to the time she became Countess of Shrewsbury. By the time she was sixty, she had helped create a dynasty and she set about celebrating her life's achievements by building herself a perfect Elizabethan memorial. At the top of each tower are her silhouetted initials ES and the huge expanse of windows gain in height on each floor inspiring the rhyme *'Hardwick Hall more glass than wall'*. They must have made the high ceilinged rooms extremely difficult to heat in winter even if softened by huge Flemish tapestries, Persian table coverings and the most wonderful embroidery.

On our way home, although we were charmed by the portrait gallery, furniture and gardens of Upton House, I

think most of us were intrigued to discover that the family origins had been linked to the making and selling of simple gift boxes ornamented with seashells. As the business grew, development and diversification were considered, taking the family down the road of buying and selling kerosene and then oils and petrol as the motor car industry emerged; what better than to remember the family beginnings by naming the new company 'Shell'!

### Small Changes

You will have noticed that a Calendar of Events is now enclosed with the Newsletter. We are also aiming to increase membership by routinely including an application form to make it easier for you to encourage a friend to join us. Can we also take this opportunity to thank all of you for continuing to support us and to welcome the following new Friends who we hope will enjoy all the advantages of being a Friend of Amgueddfa Cymru:

Mr & Mrs R. Blundell  
Mr & Mrs D.G. Morgan  
Mr Charles R. Grande  
Miss Julie Morgan  
Mrs Elisabeth Jenkins  
Mr & Mrs G.W. Jones  
Mrs B. Kurmaully  
Prof. & Mrs W.H. Evans  
Mr & Mrs A. Vaterlaws  
Mrs Rosemary Thomas  
Ms Gloria Jenkins  
Mr Michael Clarke  
Mr & Mrs R.V.P. Rees  
Ms Ruth E. Furlong  
Mr & Mrs D. Taylor  
Mr & Mrs D. Evans  
Mr & Mrs A. Mansell  
Mr & Mrs A.S. Bennett  
Mrs Susan Johnstone  
Dr Peter Freeman  
Mrs Paula Williamson  
Mr & Mrs J. Westlake

Mr & Mrs B. Rees  
Mr Stephen Rogers  
Mrs Susan Rayner  
Mr & Mrs J. Homfray  
Mrs Margaret Davies  
Mrs K.M. Drew  
Dr & Mrs A.K. Kellam  
Mrs Barbara Wells  
Mrs Janile Goodwin  
Miss Mary L. Purnell  
Mr & Mrs A. Harris  
Dr & Mrs W.B. Willott  
Mr & Mrs R.W. Morgan  
Mr & Mrs D. Davies  
Mr Gerwyn Evans  
Dr & Mrs N. Miller  
Mr & Mrs D.B. Vokes  
Mrs Linda Quinlan  
Capt. & Mrs R.J.S. Pearce  
Mrs Stella Thomas  
Mr & Mrs Wynford Lloyd Thomas

We would of course welcome any comments about any of these news items as your views and opinions are important to us and help to make the Newsletter a combined effort.

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## STEM CELLS AND STOCKHOLM : THE SCIENTIST AS VISIONARY

The Reardon Smith Lecture Theatre was the venue for a memorable evening when Professor Sir Martin Evans FRS addressed an audience of over 100 in a talk entitled *Stem Cells and Stockholm* on the evening of 22 May. The event was one in the occasional series of 'celebrity' lectures first instituted by the Friends some years ago.

Sir Martin, sometime of Cambridge University, University College London, and latterly Professor of Mammalian Genetics at Cardiff University, outlined the history of his research which had culminated in his being awarded the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine in 2007.

## DR GWYN OWAIN JONES, CBE

(Director of National Museum Wales 1968 -1977)

It quickly became apparent that the achievements which had led to the Nobel accolade were by no means a recent phenomenon, Sir Martin explaining that the development of ways to culture embryonic stem cells had been an aspiration for over 20 years. In the course of his address, which combined personal observations and anecdote with exposition of the science, Sir Martin explained that the essence of his research had been the introduction of specific gene modifications in mice by the use of embryonic stem cells - the 'building blocks' of the body which possess the unique capacity to renew themselves. This process of 'gene targeting' meant that it was now possible to produce many differing types of DNA genome leading to breakthroughs in biomedicine worldwide.

Drawing to the conclusion of his illustrated address, Sir Martin spoke of the need for an open-minded approach to scientific enquiry. The way to progress was to adopt a visionary approach. It was indeed amply clear to his audience that lateral thinking had been the key to Sir Martin's discoveries and those of his two fellow scientists who had shared in becoming Nobel Laureates in Stockholm.

Following the address Paul Loveluck, President of the Trustees of Amgueddfa Cymru / National Museum Wales, paid eloquent tribute to the work of the speaker and the way in which often difficult concepts had so clearly been conveyed in the course of Sir Martin's presentation.



Enjoying the Celebrity Dinner 2009: (from left to right) Val Courage, Jane Gagg, Paul Loveluck, Martin Evans (*guest speaker*), Roger Gagg (*Chairman*), Rose-marie Reynolds, Mari Davies.

The lecture was followed by dinner in the Grand Hall of the National Museum. Besides Sir Martin and Lady Judith Evans, distinguished guests included the Right Honourable Rhodri Morgan AM, First Minister National Assembly of Wales, and Mrs Julie Morgan MP. Dr Peter Beck, Lord Lieutenant of South Glamorgan, and his wife Dr Lyn Beck, were also present as were Paul and Lynne Loveluck.

The staging of any event of this kind is in no small measure a team effort but I am in particular indebted for their assistance to past Chairman Hefin Looker, and to Judy Edwards and Dorn Swaffield who sat on the dinner sub-committee with me. Furthermore, the event would not have been possible without the cooperation of the Museum authorities and their caterers, Digby Trout. I am particularly pleased to acknowledge the contribution made by Mark Richards, Director of Operations, whose help and support did much to ensure the success of the evening.

Roger Gagg

In June, a group of Dr Gwyn Owain Jones's relatives, friends and some of his former colleagues gathered at Queen Mary College, London, to celebrate the re-naming of the Physics Building there in honour of his memory. It was an especially joyous occasion, since we were all able to share our memories of this remarkable, many-talented man.

Much of what follows is taken from the address given at the event by Gwyn's widow, the potter and author Betty Blandino, and from the information about him displayed in the small exhibition from the university archives. 'G. O.', as he was known, was appointed Professor and Head of the Physics Department at Queen Mary in 1953, when he was in his thirties, and built it up from small beginnings to a prominent research and teaching department, the largest in the college. In the new building, constructed under his guidance, research groups covered not only his special field of low temperature physics but also diverse aspects of theoretical physics. His influence remains there, and some of the sculptures he had incorporated into the original building have been retained. He relished the nineteen years spent in QMC and called them the most enjoyable, satisfying and creative time of his working life. He would have been pleased to see 'his' department rated top UK physics department in the 2005 *Guardian* league table, and as still one of the leading departments today, and even more delighted at the distinction bestowed upon him of having the newly refurbished building named 'The G.O.Jones Building'.

After about 15 years, Gwyn made a dramatic change of career and became Director of the National Museum of Wales. He inherited a staff of about 400, a Court of a hundred-and-sixty, and innumerable unwieldy committees. He soon applied some fresh – and sometimes eyebrow-raising approaches - with new exhibitions, modern methods of interpretation and an insistence that the public came first, as well as dismantling and/or minimising committees. One curator described him as a small man with rapid movements, and a capacity for materialising suddenly out of the air and asking disconcerting questions, another as a human dynamo who energised those around him. A third claimed that he had almost single-handedly dragged the old institution into the second half of the twentieth century. Certainly, after his retirement his interest in what was happening at NMW remained constant, and he was always eager to hear about details of structural changes and new emphases.

While he was at QMC 'G.O.' had written several scientific papers, two physics books and, under Faber, three novels. Later, he added another novel and *The Conjuring Show*, a book of short stories about being brought up in Cardiff. Sometime chairman of what was then called the Welsh Academy, he kept in touch with the Welsh literary scene after retiring, first to the Wye Valley and eventually to

Oxford, and contributed frequently to English-medium journals. At Oxford, music was a powerful interest. An accomplished violinist himself, he played in several orchestras, notably the Woodstock Orchestra in which he was still playing at 86 in Bach's St Matthew Passion. He gained enormous satisfaction, too, from the music sessions ("Squitchiades") at his home in Squitchey Lane where 12-14 people played, mainly baroque music, purely for pleasure. There were over fifty such occasions, for which he would select and arrange the music. He loved Oxford, and was invited to join the Senior Common Room at Jesus College, his *alma mater*, where he enjoyed dining, parties, socialising and astutely observing people. Those who knew him well can testify to his wit and humour, especially revealing in aptly drawn cartoons and Christmas cards, as well as to his immense kindness and generosity.

Gwyn died peacefully at home on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2006. His ashes lie buried beneath a flowering cherry tree, within sight of the Clarendon Laboratory where he had once worked.

Anne Saer



## MUSEUM NEWS

You will be aware of the Museum's goal to establish a National Museum of Art, so we are sure that any news from the Art Department will always be of interest. During the 1990s Amgueddfa Cymru acquired several portraits and other heirlooms from the Vaughan family and these are now on display altogether for the first time, until January 2010. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Vaughans were the principal landowners in the county of Merioneth, inheriting the Nannau estate near Dolgellau, and re-building the house between 1788 and 1796. Sir Robert Williams Vaughan (1768-1843) was the unopposed MP for Merioneth for 44 years and the family was well known for maintaining old Welsh customs, for their traditional hospitality and their patronage of poets and harpists.

### Funding by Friends of Amgueddfa Cymru

New Friends may not be aware that every year we receive various applications for funding from the Museum and in recent years have been able to donate around £20,000 annually. This year we are delighted to report that we shall be able to continue the funding of 11 free monthly lunch-time recitals on the Wynnstay organ in Gallery 4. This organ was made by Snetzler in the 1760s and installed in the music room of Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn shortly after he moved into 20 St. James's Square London in January 1775. Snetzler was paid £250 and retained to provide an annual tuning for £4 a year. The organ was reconstructed and enlarged by Gray and Davison at the time it was moved to Wynnstay in 1864. In 1996 it was moved to the National Museum Cardiff.



Robert Adam (1728-1792) (designer) & John Snetzler (1710-1785) (maker), *The Wynnstay Chamber Organ* (Wood, gesso, ormolu 411cm x 323cm x 104cm).

The current re-development of the West Wing galleries, now well underway to completion, provides the opportunity to create new learning opportunities and to cater for the different needs of visitors. We are therefore pleased to be able to help in the creation of an area which promotes interactive learning by including a seating/reading area, interactive touch screens to aid interpretation of the museum's collections of modern art, as well as the purchasing of relevant books, magazines and catalogues.

We are also pleased to contribute to the replacement of seats that form part of the Thyme Garden project at St. Fagans. This is an area of rather complicated stone beds and pathways originally laid out in 1902. There is a topiary yew in the centre of the garden which has always been surrounded by a circular seating arrangement, originally made for the Plymouths and known as 'the Rosery' seats. The faithful copy of the original made by Dai Jones of the museum in 1983, has collapsed and we are pleased to be able to pay for its renewal in teak.

### Welsh artist honoured

Terry Setch a local artist of international renown, responsible for the wall paintings in the Friends' Room before it became a play area for children, and for several pictures in the museum's galleries has been made an RA (more on this in the next edition).

### News from the natural world

An update on the Cardiff City Hall peregrines can be found on page 23.

*A ghost slug* found in a Cardiff garden has made it into this year's top ten new species – but more of that next time!

## ★ THE DE LA BECHE ARCHIVE AT AMGUEDDFA CYMRU

The Department of Geology at Amgueddfa Cymru houses one of the most important geological archives in the world. It contains over 2,000 items - letters, diaries, journals, sketches and photographs - of one of the leading geologists of the early 19th century, Sir Henry Thomas De la Beche (1796-1855).

During the first half of the 19th century De la Beche played an important role in the new science of geology. In addition to his own scientific contributions, he established geology as a profession and founded several of Britain's major geological institutions, including: the British Geological Survey; the Museum of Practical Geology (later the Geological Museum and now part of the Natural History Museum in London); the School of Mines (now part of Imperial College London); and the Mining Record Office (now part of the Coal Authority).

De la Beche was born in London and brought up in Devon and in Lyme Regis in Dorset, where he developed an interest in geology through his friendship with a local fossil collector, Mary Anning (1799-1847).

### Jamaica

His family wealth came from a sugar plantation in Jamaica, and in 1823-4 he spent 12 months on the estate. He was regarded as a fair slave-owner and tried to improve conditions for his slaves. He also toured the island, examining its rock outcrops. On his return to England he published the first description of the geology of Jamaica and its first geological map. De la Beche is regarded as the 'Father of Jamaican geology'.

De la Beche began mapping the rocks of Devon in the early 1830s. However unrest in Jamaica, related to the abolition of slavery and the collapse of the sugar market, left him in financial difficulties and he was unable to continue his work. He wrote to the Board of Ordnance offering to complete the geological mapping of Devon for the Government for £300. His application was successful and he was appointed Geologist to the Ordnance Trigonometrical Survey.

### Founding the British Geological Survey

Once the Devon work was completed, he successfully applied to continue with the geological mapping of Cornwall, and in 1835 the Ordnance Geological Survey was established. From this grew today's British Geological Survey. When most geologists were clerics or interested

amateurs of private means, De la Beche was one of the first professionals.

In 1837, De la Beche moved his Geological Survey to Swansea, recognising the economic importance of the Welsh coalfield. He soon became involved in the local scientific scene as a member of the Swansea Philosophical and Literary Institution and a friend of the Swansea naturalist Lewis Weston Dillwyn. De la Beche was accompanied by his 18-year-old daughter Elizabeth (Bessie). She soon got to know one of Dillwyn's sons, Lewis Llewelyn Dillwyn, and they married in August 1838. It is from their

descendants that the Museum acquired the bulk of the De la Beche archive in the 1930s.

### Spectacular fossils discovered

The papers contain a wealth of information about the developing science of geology in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The names of the geological timescale (Cambrian, Ordovician and so on) that we now take so much for granted were being proposed and argued over; new and spectacular fossils were being discovered; and evidence of the Ice Age was being recognised for the first time.

De la Beche himself worked on the first descriptions of the large fossil marine reptiles, the ichthyosaurs and the plesiosaurs, and there is much in the papers on the formation of the Geological Survey and the other organizations he established.



De la Beche and his daughters in Swansea in 1853.

### Darwin writes to De la Beche

De la Beche corresponded with the leading geologists of the day and, with his experience of Jamaica, was often called on for advice relating to that island. One letter of 1842 in the collection quizzes him about the colours of horses, cattle and other animals bred for a number of generations on the island, and how they had changed. The author was Charles Darwin, at that time formulating his theory of evolution.

De la Beche was a skilled draughtsman and this is evident in the archive, for in addition to faithful landscape views, fossil illustrations and geological cross-sections, he sketched many caricatures and cartoons. Through these he would comment on developments in the science, or on his activities and those of his contemporaries.

The archive is an important resource for the history of geology and is frequently consulted by researchers from Britain and abroad.

Tom Sharpe

## THE SCULPTOR NEXT DOOR: FRANK ROPER 1914 -2000

Ilse M Fisher

When, in 1985, my late husband and I started to renovate the Victorian house we had bought in Penarth, part of the work involved building a 3m high retaining wall for the slope at the back of the house. As this work was underway a man of medium build appeared from the new house at the top. He looked down rather disapprovingly and asked what we were doing. I noticed that he wore an old tweed jacket with leather elbow patches and he was wearing a colourful knitted tie (I subsequently learnt that he always wore a tie or cravat!). He then introduced himself and said that he used to live in the house we had bought. This was Frank Roper, the sculptor, and now many things fell into place.



For instance we had realised that the previous occupants had lived on the first and second floor only (there was no central heating on the ground floor) and what became our kitchen on the ground floor had been used as a foundry; the doors were black from smoke and heat and there were bits of metal in the space where the fireplace had been. We later discovered that another ground floor room had been used as his wife Nora's studio and a third as a gallery for their work.

Thus I first met Frank and Nora Roper, who became very close friends, almost an extended family, and it is typical of his generosity that their house warming present to us was a sculpture for a fountain with our initials and a lion's head. He had clearly forgiven us the wall which now separated his old house from his new home and indeed we built steps joining the two gardens with a gate designed by Frank and soon this was used almost daily.

Although born a Yorkshire man, he and his wife Nora (a renowned artist in her own right) lived for the last 52 years of his life in Wales. He was appointed to the College of Art in Cardiff as head of Sculpture, with an already substantial reputation, later he became Vice Principal. He was not a churchgoer, but he had many friends amongst the clergy and his work is to be found in many churches both

in Wales (for example Llandaff Cathedral, St David's Cathedral, St Augustine's Church in Penarth, Christ Church Roath, St Denys Lisvane and many others) and in England (for example Durham Cathedral, Wells Cathedral, Southwark Cathedral and Peterborough Cathedral). For these commissions he worked in metal, mainly aluminium and bronze and also in glass. He designed altars in concrete and stone, but his only work in wood is a carving for St Martin's Church in Roath where there is also a set of his Stations of the Cross. Many of his church windows had coloured glass designed with Nora. More details of the works he had completed for churches, especially in South Wales, can be found in a booklet and a calendar, both for sale in Llandaff Cathedral.

In addition to many church pieces he also loved making small objects such as the Chinese dancers (*shown left*) and the classical sculpture of a seated lady (both are 27cm tall) both cast in the traditional way.

My favourite sculpture is the Sumo wrestler (*shown below*) which my husband bought at an exhibition in St David's Hall arranged for Frank's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1994. The balancing of the bulk of the figure is just perfect so is the chosen size of the sculpture: 60 cm tall.

He developed a novel technique of casting metal using 'lost polystyrene' instead of the traditional 'lost wax' process. First he made a model in polystyrene then buried it in a box filled with sand with tubes or sprues attached to the model; the liquid aluminium was then poured in vaporising the polystyrene. Thus the cast was made. This is why the surface of his sculptures using this technique is always slightly pitted. He cast his later sculptures in the new

foundry in the garage of the modern house in Penarth, which his architect daughter Rachel had designed.



He enjoyed making water clocks, mythological figures, musical fountains (when he worked together with Karlheinz Stockhausen), and animated constructions such as a walking lion. The combination of water and metal seemed to have fascinated Frank and he

created several fountains in Tuscany, Cyprus and Canada.

His typography in metal is glorious. It can be seen in many of his church works, particularly his lettered panel for the tomb of Beda Venerabilis in the Galilee Chapel in Durham Cathedral. His last works included the grave markers he made for his wife and himself for St Lawrence's Churchyard at Lavernock. He made these markers after Nora had

died and after he had been diagnosed with cancer; he cast two successive numbers for his own memorial and regrettably the first was the one that had to be used. He died of cancer of the lung and it has been speculated that the fumes from the polystyrene he used may have contributed to this.

Frank was a modest man, who always felt that his work was not as perfect as he wished it to be; everyone else thought it was wonderful. Whilst he was often reticent, when he was planning a new project he became excited and voluble. When pondering over a new project he loved to chew his pipe in the garage since Nora had forbidden him to smoke in the house.

I feel very privileged that our 2 families had been so close for the last 15 years of Frank's life.

Amgueddfa Cymru has two examples of Frank's work and one is currently on show in the Oriol Restaurant there. It is simply titled *A Horse*. Next time you go for a meal there enjoy it.



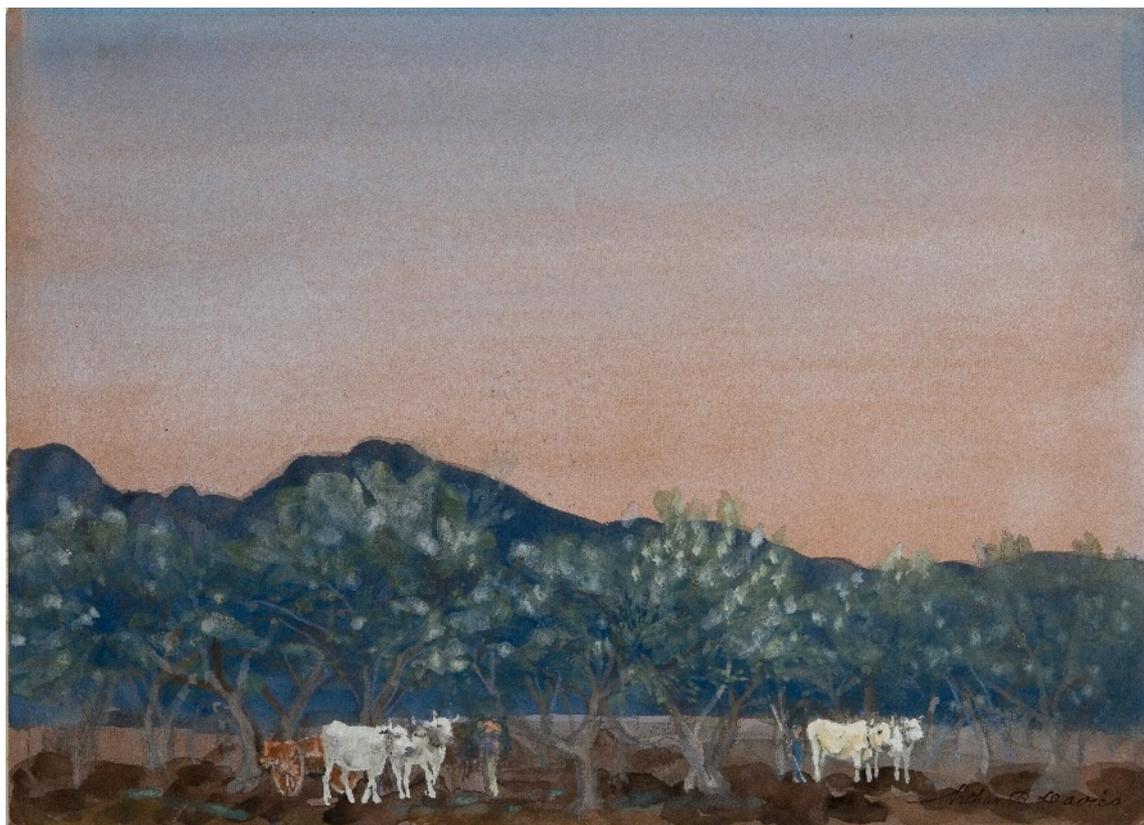
Frank Roper, *Seated Woman* (height 27cm).



Frank Roper, *Horse* (Aluminium, 65.5 cm), Acquired by Amgueddfa Cymru 1963.

## THE EIGHT

An article on The Eight is to be found on the next page. Amgeuddfa Cymru holds three paintings by Arthur B. Davies, who was a member of the group: *Spring Evening*, *White Oxen* and *Moonlight on a River*, but does not have any examples by its other members.



Above *White Oxen* (Mixed media on paper, 24.5cm x 33.2cm, Miss Emma Davies Bequest, 1935) and below *Moonlight on a River* (Mixed media on paper, 16cm x 21.4cm, Gift of Captain Leonard Twiston Davies, 1935).



Our Art Department has provided us with these two paintings by Arthur B. Davies and we are most grateful to Clare Smith for arranging the reproduction of these pictures and to Amgeuddfa Cymru for their permission to publish them.

## THE EIGHT

I had just returned from attending Ann Saer's guided tour of the Alfred Sisley Exhibition. (I do commend these guided tours which sometimes are led by members of your committee and other Friends; they bring the subjects alive and, judging by the reaction of those who attend they are greatly appreciated.) I digress. Two American ladies approached me under the misguided impression that, because I was wearing my Friend's badge, I was an authority of the exhibits. "Tell us", they said, "Where are the paintings of 'The Eight'?" I had to confess that I did not know. I also had to tell them that unfortunately the Museum was closing in a few moments but that if they came again all would be revealed. They were mollified but they did assure me that if we did not have paintings by these celebrated painters we were denying ourselves many pleasures. This observation inspired me to ask the oracles at our museum for information, as these ladies indicated that they may well come again.

So who were the "The Eight" and why are they so called? They were eight artists working in New York who at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had an exhibition at the Macbeth Gallery in New York in January 1908. The show caused sufficient stir that it subsequently toured the United States. The eight were Arthur B Davies, William Glackens, Robert Henri, Ernest Lawson, George Luks, Maurice Prendergast, Everett Shinn, and John Sloan.

In one sense they are a disparate group of artists united only by this one show. Indeed the works of Arthur B Davies and Maurice Prendergast are very different from those of the other six whose work, along with others such as George Bellows, was disparagingly known as the "Ashcan School" because of its gritty sense of realism. So what united "The Eight" was more a reaction against the prevailing academic style and subject matter that had characterized American painting up to that time, than a commitment to a single style of painting.

But soft! If the American ladies were to call again, and as they were quite eloquent in praise of these other painters, I decided to do a little investigative work so that I should be worthy of wearing a badge, that to them indicated I was a man of authority!

Arthur B Davies (1862-1928) was almost the antithesis of his co-exhibitors. His paintings tend towards symbolism in works such as *Unicorns (Legends – Sea Calm)* (1906) being described by the art critic Robert Hughes as "frieze-like and idyllic". His private life also set him apart: for 25 years he ran two households one for his wife and the other for his mistress, both of whom had children by him.

William Glackens (1870-1938), a product of the Pennsylvania Academy, worked as an illustrator for several newspaper and magazines in Philadelphia. He was a high-school friend of Sloan's and shared a studio with Henri. He risked his life on many occasions as he wanted to be

near the action. His most famous paintings were *Central Park in Winter* (1905) *Chez Mouquin* (1905) (an uptown version of Degas' *Absinthe Drinkers*), and the *Boxing Match* (1906).

Robert Henri (1865-1929) was noted for his paintings of marvellous greyish scenes of the East River in New York City. He was best known though for his full-length portraits of women that evoked comparison with those of Whistler and John Singer Sargent. *Young Woman in Black* (1902) and *Jessica Penn in Black* (1908) were two of his most famous.

Ernest Lawson (1873-1939) a softly spoken man who favoured river scenes, joined the eight in New York influenced mainly by the Impressionists. He had been hailed as a world-class landscape painter. His works include *Winter on the River* (1907) and *Spring Night, Harlem River* (1913).

George Luks (1867-1933), another who studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, started off as a newspaper illustrator for the Philadelphia Press before moving to New York. One of his most famous paintings is *The Wrestlers* (1905).

Maurice Prendergast (1859-1924) was a Canadian-born Bostonian and is regarded as one of the finest American artists working in watercolours, although after 1904 much of his work was in oils. *Revere Beach* (1896) and *May Day, Central Park* (1901) were two of his most famous paintings.

Everett Shinn (1876-1953) spent most of his time working as an illustrator for Philadelphia newspapers. A well known painting of his is *A Winter's Night on Broadway* (1900) which depicts prosperous Gothamites scurrying into and out of hansom cabs on a snowy evening in front of the old Metropolitan Opera House. This picture became the centre spread for the Harper's Weekly of 17<sup>th</sup> February 1905 and can be seen in a great number of American books on modern paintings.

John Sloan (1871-1951) was probably the most talented of "The Eight". He roamed the city in search of street scenes and many of them now fetch high prices. Here are a few examples: *Wake of the Ferry* (1907), *Clown Making Up* (1909), *Sunday, Women Drying Their Hair* (1912). He continued to give painting lessons and to provide illustrations for Harpers Weekly and Colliers, until he was well into his seventies.

You may well wonder why we are producing this article dealing with what to us are obscure American artists. You may well find yourself in our museum and an American may well ask you, "Have you any exhibits of works by "The Eight"?" You will be able to demonstrate that we are quite knowledgeable on the subject of American artists, and that we do have paintings by one of "The Eight".

Philip Lee

## CORSHAM

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Judy Edwards

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Friends who came on a summer trip to Chichester a year or two ago will have been introduced to the town of Corsham in Wiltshire. The visit to Corsham Court left little time to explore the high street and its many attractive buildings of Bath stone but it is an ideal place for a day out, particularly if set in the context of some history.

The name Corsham probably means the home or village of someone named Corsa. The origins of the town may date back to a time when it was a Saxon settlement lying at the outer edge of the Kingdom of Wessex at the south eastern fringe of the Cotswolds. As the Saxons united, Corsham took on a more prominent role as a royal manor lying at the convergence of two great forests that were favourite hunting grounds of kings. We know for example that from Saxon times a hunting lodge existed near to, or on the site of Corsham Court, called by William of Malmesbury *Ethelred's Palace*. In fact, the Court Roll of Ethelred the Unready (978 – 1017) mentions the King staying at his manor house at Corsham when hunting in Melksham Forest.

The Anglo-Saxons farmed sheep on the Cotswolds (*cots* were where local people kept the sheep on the *wolds or uplands*). It was not until the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries however, that sheep farming became a major source of wealth with wool being exported to Flanders and Lombardy where thriving spinning and weaving industries had grown up. Edward 111 stopped all that, banning the export of wool from England and the import of woven goods, topping it all by forbidding the wearing of garments made from foreign wool. He then lured Flemish weavers to England, many settling in the Cotswolds where they established a thriving textile cottage industry. Corsham high street has a row of very attractive dwellings still known as the *Flemish Cottages*. Weavers continued to work in Corsham until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the wool industry of the South was finally taken over by the North.

After the Norman Conquest, William the Conqueror awarded the church and lands of Corsham Manor to Caen Abbey in Normandy. The secular part of the manor stayed in royal hands for centuries and formed part of the dowry to Queens of England. Elizabeth 1 sold the entire manorial rights to her Lord Chancellor Sir Christopher Hatton for £15,000 although subsequent financial problems forced him to sell the manor at a loss. The Elizabethan Manor dates from 1582 and later owners included Sir Edward Hungerford a prominent parliamentarian at the time of the Civil War. His widow was responsible for the building of the Corsham Almshouses which can be seen by looking to the left when reaching the end of the High Street.

If Corsham was built on wool and weaving, it was also built on stone. The ready availability of limestone in the Cotswolds made it convenient building material since at least Roman times. Corsham sits on a seam that extends in a 20 mile radius of Bath, giving its name to the stone. It differs from Cotswold stone by having a lower limestone content. This makes it lighter in colour and more friable – more suitable for producing the ‘dressed’ blocks of stone so commonly used in the building of towns such as Bath and Corsham. Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, stone quarried in the Corsham area was largely used locally, but then Brunel arrived to build the Box Hill railway tunnel and in the process helped to uncover huge new deposits. This provided another source of wealth as large amounts of the quarried stone were sold and transported further afield.

After the First World War, the expense of extracting stone and the development of alternative and cheaper building materials almost brought the quarrying of Bath stone to an end. But with more recent and renewed interest in conservation and designing buildings sympathetic to their context, high quality limestone is again in demand – there are now three quarries in the Corsham area regularly extracting such stone. And one of the local quarries was developed as an underground government headquarters in the 1950s in case there should be some kind of nuclear disaster. Code named ‘Burlington’, it comprises a radiation proof bunker 100 feet underground, with a street for Whitehall Ministries on each side and a pub called the Rose and Crown. The site is currently *mothballed* although the facility is maintained by a small staff and the Ministry of Defence continues to invest in Corsham with its site at Basil Hill focusing on military communication projects.

Over a number of centuries the manor of Corsham had been divided geographically. In 1745 it was bought by Paul Methuen who successfully sought an Act of parliament to re-unite all the manorial rights of the parish which had previously been split up between tenants. It is possible that most of those with the surname Methuen or Methven originally came from the village of Methven in Perthshire and the rise in their family fortunes has been evident from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Paul Methuen who was an ancestor of the Corsham branch of the family, was said to have been a baker in Dundee before becoming a Protestant reformer. However he fled from Scotland in 1563 having been deposed as a minister for committing adultery. His son, another Paul, also got into hot water in 1587 when as a Prebendary of Wells Cathedral he was sanctioned by the Chapter for defrauding the church and the choristers of their revenues. But his son Anthony who died in 1640 was made of sterner stuff. He was educated at Oxford and became Vicar of Frome where he and his wife Jane are buried. The Corsham Methuen family are directly descended from their third son Paul who was apprenticed to a successful clothier John Ashe, describing his pupil as becoming the greatest clothier of his time. Paul married his employer’s daughter and it was their eldest son John who was the first Methuen to be involved in public life. He became the Whig MP for Devizes and

later the Ambassador Extraordinary to Portugal from 1703 until he died. He had married Mary Chivers in about 1671 and it was the eldest of their three children Sir Paul Methuen K.B. (1672-1757) whose historic collection is now displayed at Corsham Court. He had been educated in Paris and by the age of seventeen could speak three foreign languages, entering the diplomatic service at twenty and following his father's death became Ambassador to Lisbon. He also held prestigious posts at home between 1709-1730 including Lord of the Admiralty and Controller of the King's Household.



Picture Gallery, Corsham Court.

From 1715 onwards Sir Paul bought Old Master paintings in England and on the continent, until he had amassed a collection of about two hundred and fifty pictures. Seventy five remain at Corsham and those that were sold can be found in the National Gallery in London, the Courtold Galleries, the Metropolitan Museum of Art New York, the National Gallery Washington, the Detroit Institute of Arts and the National Gallery Toronto. The entire collection, including furniture and objets d'art, was left to his brother since Sir Paul had never married. Then in his twenties, it was his trustees who bought Corsham Court in 1745, in part to house the fabulous collection. After marriage in 1749, this Paul commissioned Capability Brown to enlarge Corsham House but he died at his London home and it was his son Paul Cobb Methuen (1752-1816) who engaged Nash to make further alterations to Corsham House in order to accommodate more pictures and books following the sale of the London house. Like his father, Paul Cobb was painted by both Reynolds and Gainsborough but his wife Matilda, not liking her Gainsborough portrait, chose to sit for William Hoare of Bath instead.

Structural problems relating to the work of Nash soon became apparent but it was left to the eldest son of Paul Cobb (yet another Paul 1779-1849) to sort them out. This Paul was elevated to the peerage in Queen Victoria's Coronation Honours in 1838. The family continue to live in the upper floors of the house, preserving the collection for public viewing, together with their tranquil gardens which includes a Gothic folly and a bath house by Capability Brown.



St Teilo's Church *in situ* at National History Museum, St Fagans.

April saw a very special event for us: a special pre-publication launch of the book that tells the whole story of the St Teilo's Church project.

***Saving St Teilo's: Bringing a medieval church to life*** costs just £14.99 and is for sale in our shops at St Fagans and National Museum Cardiff. It is available in Welsh as ***Achub Eglwys Sant Teilo: Ailgodi adeilad ganoloesol***. The book is edited by Gerallt Nash, Senior Curator of Historic Buildings at St Fagans, whose involvement with the project goes back twenty-five years.

After so many years spent dismantling, researching and recreating the Church, this book is an opportunity for us to learn about the expertise and skills involved in this enormous project, in the voices of the experts themselves.

***Saving St Teilo's*** takes us right back to medieval times, beginning with a look at what the building's role would have been at that time. The book then moves through the Post-Reformation period right up to the Church's abandonment in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The core of the book deals with recreating every detail of the building, by looking at the materials – wood, stone, ceramic and so on – in turn. This section interweaves the archaeology, research and craftsmanship used to either rescue or recreate everything, from the huge oak roof trusses to the ornate detailing on the wildly colourful Rood screen.

The book is a welcome opportunity to celebrate all the commitment, work and expertise that has gone into the St Teilo's project over the years – I hope you'll find it a worthy celebration.

**Mari Gordon**

Mari Gordon is Head of Publishing, Amgueddfa Cymru

## FROM THE SEAL CUPBOARD: MARY MAGDALENE AT GOLDCLIFF

Madeleine Gray

The Museum has, in its collection of seals, an impression of the seal of Goldcliff Priory. Goldcliff was dedicated to Mary Magdalene, and the seal shows the saint at one of the most dramatic moments in a life filled with drama. She has come to Jesus's tomb with a jar of spices to anoint his body, but the tomb has been opened and the body is gone. Blind with weeping, she is accosted by a man who she thinks is the gardener, but when he speaks to her she realises that he is Jesus, risen from the dead. The seal depicts her in this moment of spiritual enlightenment and reawakening. Beneath her feet, the figure of a prior kneels with his hands raised in worship.

Goldcliff was one of the monasteries established by the Normans as they gradually conquered South Wales. It was thus an 'alien priory', with a French prior, and as England was at war with France for so much of the later medieval period (the 'Hundred Years' War', actually much longer than a century) this caused immense difficulties. The priory was eventually closed down in the fifteenth century and most of its property went to Henry VI's new foundation at Eton College.

The cult of Mary Magdalene has attracted a lot of recent attention because of books like Dan Brown: *Da Vinci Code* and Baigent, Lee and Lincoln: *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail*. Most of these are based not on the biblical Mary of Magdala but on the medieval tradition which rolled a number of the biblical Marys into one character and identified her (on rather dubious grounds) as a reformed prostitute. The medieval tradition identified Mary of Bethany, Mary the sister of Martha, who sat at Christ's feet and heard his words, with the Mary Magdalene from whom Christ cast out seven devils (Luke 8.2) and who accompanied the Virgin Mary and Mary Cleophas at the Crucifixion and first saw Christ after the Resurrection. She was in turn identified with the anonymous penitent woman who anointed Christ at the house of Simon the Pharisee and washed his feet with her tears (7.37-50). She was forgiven "because she loved much", and from this

stemmed her identification with the woman taken in adultery (John 8.3) and the tradition that she was a prostitute.

An even fuller version of this story had Mary betrothed to St John the Evangelist and claimed that it was at their wedding feast that Christ performed his first miracle, turning water into wine. However, according to this version, John then decided to follow Christ and to live in chastity, and it was this which drove Mary to a life of immorality. This medieval story was a complete contrast with the earlier biblical and apocryphal tradition (exemplified most fully in the fragmentary *Gospel of Mary*) which presented Mary Magdalene as a prophetic church leader.



Seal of Goldcliff Priory: Buff sulphur cast (53 x 32 mm).

The identification of Mary as the *apostolorum apostola*, the Apostle of the Apostles, has its roots in the accounts of the Resurrection in the gospels of Mark and John in which Mary Magdalene is named as the woman who announces the news of Christ's resurrection to the other apostles. The apocryphal gospels and subsequent legends (given in their fullest form in the *Golden Legend* and summarised in *Buchedd Mair Fadlen*) embroidered on this, representing Mary Magdalene as present at Pentecost and receiving the gifts of the Spirit then becoming an ascetic and a missionary to southern Gaul.

The conclusions which could be drawn from this were ambivalent and even controversial. On the one hand, Mary Magdalene was a powerful example of a woman who took a leading role in the early church.

On the other hand, Christ's command to Mary not to touch him was widely interpreted as meaning that women should not touch the things which belonged to the church. However, the tradition that Mary Magdalene abased herself because she was a repentant prostitute, or at least an unchaste woman, certainly made available a powerful image of repentance, forgiveness and subsequent holiness. It could also be presented as part of the Biblical and apocryphal tradition: it was precisely because Mary Magdalene had sinned that she was called to the apostolic life. She was depicted at the deathbed in medieval books of advice on making a good death, alongside other repentant sinners like Peter, Paul and the Good Thief, encouraging the dying person not to despair.

The typical iconography of Mary Magdalene with her jar of ointment represents her most obviously as a penitent.

## THE EDITOR'S POETRY CORNER

However, it is yet another of the complex and many-layered images of medieval religious art and can also be read as a reference to her importance as the *apostolorum apostola*, the Apostle of the Apostles. It was as a penitent that she anointed Christ with the precious ointment and wept over his feet: but it was also with sweet spices that she came to anoint his dead body and learned of the resurrection. Her anointing with oil gives her an almost priestly role as it prefigures the final sacrament of Extreme Unction. She appears with the jar of spikenard in a thirteenth-century wall painting in a privileged position on the north wall of the chancel at Llantwit Major, next to a fragmentary painting of the Virgin Mary. (Her presence here may indicate the location of a temporary Easter sepulchre, used for the ritual re-enactment of the burial and resurrection of Christ as part of the medieval liturgy for Easter.) The painting is simple and even crude but it neatly encapsulates the two aspects of her identity, the jar of spikenard in one hand symbolizing both penitence and sacramental authority, her other hand upraised in witness, identifying her as the first preacher of the Resurrection.

So Mary Magdalene was an important and popular saint: but we still need to ask whether a prostitute, however repentant, was an appropriate saint for a community of celibate monks. It is certainly interesting to find as patron of a male house a saint who challenged male dominance of the church. In fact, the monks of Goldcliff may not have had much choice in the matter. The dedication of the priory may have come from an existing church on the site: Robert de Chandos's foundation charter gave the abbey of Bec "*the church of St Mary Magdalene of Goldcliff with its lands and tithes ... to form a community to serve God and the glorious servant of Christ, Mary Magdalene*". This phrasing does suggest that Robert de Chandos was an enthusiastic follower of the cult of Mary Magdalene and the monks may have felt it politic to go along with his ideas. The monastic seals suggest that they might even have been hedging their bets. They also had a seal depicting the Virgin and Child, possibly a more appropriate choice. However, it is worth remembering that legend gave Mary Magdalene an almost monastic afterlife of penance as a hermit in the wilderness of southern France (this is what Donatello depicted in his savagely emaciated statue of her now in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in Florence). And her depiction at the moment of spiritual awakening could be a parallel with the spiritual rebirth of a monk at his profession.

The Museum has another seal depicting Mary Magdalene in the garden (W151 in David Williams's catalogue), a cast made from a bronze matrix found in the topsoil near Ewenny Priory. Ewenny is dedicated to St Michael; the nearest church dedicated to Mary Magdalene is at Mawdlam near Kenfig, about 8 miles away. It is more likely that the Ewenny seal belonged to a private individual, someone who had a particular devotion to Mary Magdalene or even possibly a woman named after her.

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If you share my enthusiasm for poetry you will constantly find references to your favourite poet in street names, memorials in churches, in church yards, and poems that form part of songs and advertisements, but you will seldom find a walk and a herb garden devoted to a celebrated British poet. Here is just one. I refer to Henry Vaughan (1621-95). Henry is recognised as one of the great visionary poets and it is said that many poets of a later generation e.g. William Wordsworth, Alfred Tennyson and Siegfried Sassoon looked to Henry Vaughan for inspiration.

Henry wrote many fine poems. Here are just a few: *The World*, *They Are All Gone into the World of Light*, *Peace*, *The Night* and *The Retreat*.

Perhaps *The World* is his best known poem and here are the first few lines that will give you a flavour of his thinking.

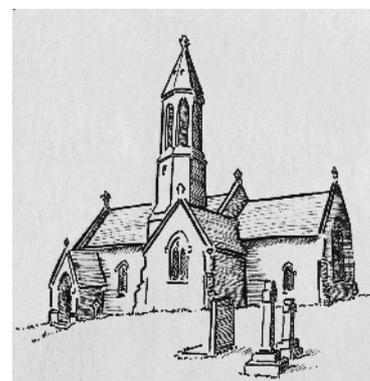
I saw Eternity the other night  
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,  
    All calm, as it was bright,  
And round beneath it, Time in hours, days, years  
    Driv'n by the spheres,  
Like a vast shadow mov'd in which the world  
    And all her train were hurl'd.  
The dotting lover, in his quaintest strain  
    Did there complain;  
Near him, his lute, his fancy, and his flights  
    Wit's sour delights,  
With gloves, and knots, the silly snares of pleasure,  
    Yet his dear treasure  
All scatter'd lay, while he his eyes did pour  
    Upon a flow'r.



I have wandered away from the "Walk" and I do commend it to you. It is a very gentle stroll of about 4km lasting about 1.5 hours and the scenery and atmosphere are quite splendid. The walk starts in Talybont-on-Usk and you just follow the swan logo. The leaflet can be

picked up at the Post Office in Talybont or from local information centres. It will tell you about the Herb Garden and the graveyard where Henry is buried.

Your chums will be ever so pleased that you have introduced them to a glorious part of our countryside and to a little of the life relating to one of our famous visionary poets.



Church at Llansantffraed, just across the valley from Talybont, where Henry Vaughan is buried.

## GALUPPI AND GOLDONI

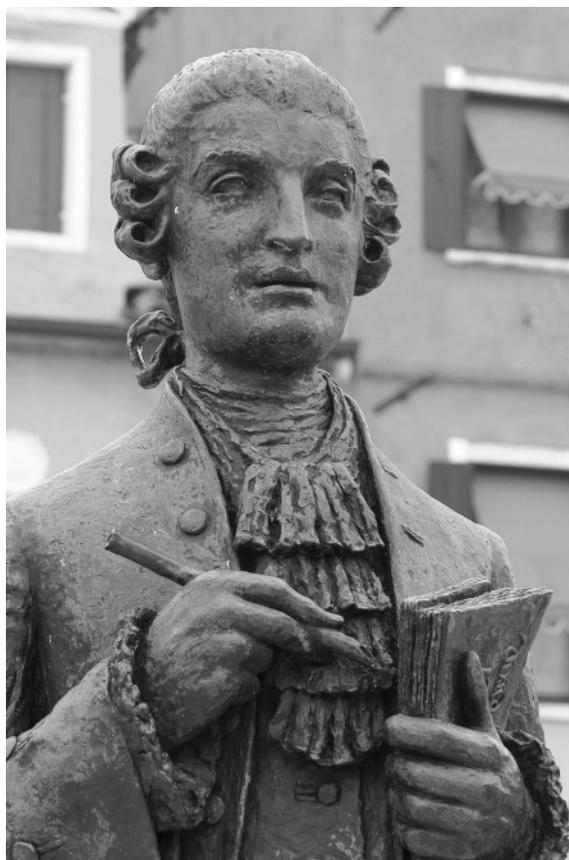
Simon Rees

My first encounter with Baldassare Galuppi was through Robert Browning's poem, "A Toccata of Galuppi's", a threnody on the decline of Venice, by a poet who had visited Venice and its environs for many years.

I was living in Asolo at the time, the small toy-town north west of Treviso, built for the exiled Queen Caterina Cornaro by the Venetian Republic, as a compensation for the loss of her kingdom. Here Caterina lived for years surrounded by a court of scholars and poets, and here I lived for one year, teaching the children of a dying industrialist, and taking my free Wednesdays off in Venice, catching the bus that ran from the bottom of the hill to Castelfranco, then changing to the local train to Santa Lucia station. Galuppi wrote more sonatas than toccatas (it is doubtful whether he wrote even one of these) but Browning's poem created an evocative image of a city in decay: "What of soul was left, I wonder, when the kissing had to stop?"

My neighbour in Asolo, Marchesa Nannina Fossi, was the granddaughter of Mrs Bronson, Browning's hostess in Asolo and Venice, a wealthy American who also entertained Henry James: the marchesa remembered sitting as a child at the feet of the novelist, while he droned on and on in an interminable monologue, boring her out of her skull. I had the delightful sensation, while trespassing in her garden in search of ripe persimmons (which nobody bothered to pick) of walking in a garden where both Browning and James might have taken the air, and enjoyed the panorama from the hillside across the whole of the Venetian plain, with Venice and Iesolo visible on one side of the horizon, and Vicenza and Padua on the other.

My next encounter with Galuppi was through an invitation from the music don at New College, Oxford, to translate an opera called *Il mondo alla roversa, o le donne che commandano* (*The world turned upside down, or the women take charge*). This curious piece, recorded on CD but never, as far as we know, performed in Britain, was a setting of a libretto by another great Venetian, the playwright Carlo Goldoni, Galuppi's contemporary and friend. I played through the CDs, cheered to find the music agreeable and tuneful, not so much a descendent of Vivaldi as a precursor of Haydn and Mozart, on the cusp between the baroque and the early classical. The subject of the opera (puzzled out from the libretto) was a group of women on an island in the Antipodes (Australia?). Had it been discovered by 1750, the year of the opera's first performance at the Teatro Tron di San Cassiano? No, James Cook was still working on the Baltic trading fleet, and was not to make it to Australia for another two decades. So the Antipodean island was nothing but a fantasy.



Anon, Monument to Baldassare Galuppi (1706-1785). Island of Burano, Venice.

The playwright, Goldoni, was the greatest comic writer of his day, a Venetian in both language and imagination, who used both the high-Italian of Tuscany and the vivid language of the Venetians to provide contrast in his plays. Goldoni's plays were free of the influence of the commedia dell'arte and avoided using stock characters (he left the commedia to his rival, Carlo Gozzi, who provided the world with the texts of *Turandot*, *The Love of Three Oranges* and *King Stag*), while his dialogue made free with contemporary customs and prejudices, satirised the latest modes and pilloried vanity and folly. However, the prejudices and follies in this text turned out to be on Goldoni's part: the play is an arrant piece of anti-feminism, postulating that in a world ruled by women, all the men will be reduced to emasculated mountebanks, primping their curls and painting their faces, sent off to the kitchen to cook, to the garden to labour at weeding, and to the boudoir to get on with the embroidery, while the women run the garrison and the armoury. Cintia, Aurora and Tulia turned out to be termagants of the first order, scolds and harridans from some 18<sup>th</sup> century hell, and their effeminate lovers, Giacinto (Hyacinth, for goodness sake), Rinaldino and Graziosino, were a trio of wimps and fops, fit for nothing but poncing about in the bedchamber, emptying chamberpots and chasing flies.

Translating Goldoni's librettos is a charming challenge, as rhymes and metres are as intricate, brilliant and colourful as Venetian glasswork, tinkling and chiming as the singers go through their roulades and trills. His recitatives, far

from dry, are witty dialogues, with sparring matches between the characters played out with words sharpened to a point. The challenge, as always in preparing a singing translation, is to find words that rhyme in English without crippling the line of the music, or providing the singer with an unsingable vowel: ‘e’ or ‘i’ on a high note being the usual problem, and avoiding consonant clusters in words like ‘strengths’ or ‘texts’. I found my rhyming dictionary (Willard P. Espy, *Words to Rhyme With*) less useful than usual, without much help when it came to rhyming ‘triviali’ with ‘orinali’ – the best I could manage was ‘despot’ and ‘pisspot’, a trifling rhyme. I also found myself committing such faults as rhyming ‘passion’ with ‘thrashing’, and ‘cruelly’ with ‘truly’: may I be forgiven. At least (so far) I have managed to avoid ‘combat’ and ‘wombat’, or ‘parsley’ and ‘sparsly’, which always seem to lurk in a threatening manner over the next page or so.

Galuppi was regarded as the father of Italian opera buffa, and Goldoni the father of Italian comedy, so it did not come as a surprise to discover that the plot itself was highly entertaining, if one could put the sexism into the same category as the 18<sup>th</sup> century attitude towards the Turk: strictly in the class of an historical anomaly. The plot is brought to a head by the arrival of Ferramonte, the steely hero who overturns the rule of women, and whose name in itself indicates that he is not likely to be swayed by feminine wiles or the brandishing of a marital rolling-pin. It is, of course, the women themselves who are blamed for the loss of their topsy-turvy world.



### “Y PETHAU BYCHAIN”

Pan ymffurfiodd fân linellau’r cloc digidol a dangos 8.30, cyhoeddodd y trefnydd bod y nifer disgwylidig wedi cyrraedd a bod y bws ar fin cychwyn. Symudodd llaw’r gyrrwr i gyfeiriad botwm coch ac yna, gyda’i fawd, gwasgu’n ysgafn. Yn ddioed, heb frys na naid, wele’r wibdaith i Dyddewi ar ei ffordd. Gydag un cylch-dro cyfan o eiddo olwynion y bws esmwyth symudodd pawb undeg un troedfedd ymlaen - dros dri metr yn ôl geirfa mesur-adau heddiw. Tybed sawl tro a wnaeth yr olwynion cyn cwblhau’r daith o 111 milltir. Mae’r pethau bychain - mân linellau’r cloc, bys bawd, botwm, symud fesur cylchedd olwyn - wedi hawlio’u lle’n barod. Cyfrinach y bychan, geni y mwy!

Dwy awr o olygfeydd yn llawn o’r pethau bychain oedd y daith bob tro: trefi a phentrefi bychain; tai a gerddi bychain; bryniau a dyffrynnoedd bychain. O’u rhoi at ei gilydd, y ffermydd a’r ffyrdd, y tirwedd a’r tyfiant, yr amaethu a’r cynaeafu, y caeau pori a’r cloddiau gwyrgam, cawn frodwaith o hanes, gwaith, newid a pharhâd; golygfa sy’n eli llygad, sy’n fodd i fyw, yn llonni’r ysbryd. Mae gwreiddiau i’r cymunedau hyn.

Tyddewi: dinas a’i galwodd ei hun wrth enw sant a nawddsant, Dewi, nawddsant Cymru. Enw arwyddocaol.



Dewi Sant, (Ffenestr yng Nghapel Coleg yr Iesu, Rhydychyn) © Casper Gutman.

Nid Maenordy Dewi, nid Palasdy Dewi. Tyddewi – daw’r enw o reng y pethau bychain. Pwyslais Dewi oedd y pethau bychain: “*Arghwyddi, frodyr a chwirydd, byddwch lawen a chedwch eich ffydd a’ch cred, a gnewch y pethau bychain a glynsoch ac a welsoch gynnyf i’?*” Yn siwr, bu’r dref gyda’i strydoedd bychain, tai, siopau a phalmentydd bychain yn rhyddeddol o ffyddlon i’w anogaeth! Daeth tô o arweinwyr crefyddol/eglwysig â blaenoriaethau tra gwahanol i flaenoriaethau’r brawd asgetigaidd hwn. Yn y cyfnod Normanaidd daeth barwniaid a thirfeddianwyr â’u pwyslais eu hunain. Eu dylanwad hwy yw’r Gadeirlan Gothig a’r nenfwd cywrair o dderw cerfiedig. Mae iddynt eu apêl. Daw dros dri chwarter miliwn o bobl yn flynyddol ar ymweliad neu ar bererindod. Estron beth yw’r palas yn y Glyn a’r adfail. Nac anghofier gyfraniaid ‘y pethau bychain’ yn y cyfanwaith nodedig. Crefftwyr ynghyd â morthwyl, cyn, carreg wrth garreg, derw, cyllell, cynllun a chydewyllys cymuned a gododd yr adeilad sy’n cysgodi yn Glyn Rhosyn. I’r pererin hwn, fodd bynnag, y mae cadeirlan arall o waith Dewi ei hun.

Profiad to ar ôl to yw bod gwneud y pethau bychain yn fendith. Mae anogaeth Dewi Sant yn fynegbost diogel yn nheimpladau, disgwyliadau a gobeithion pobl Cymru. Dywed hanes bod bryn wedi codi dan draed y sant wrth iddo bregethu yn Llanddewibrefi. Bu’r pethau bychain yn dir diogel dan draed y distadlaff a’r disgleiriaf. Gwyddont fod i bethau bychain barhâd gydol oes a thros oesau. Dathlant yn flynyddol ei anogaeth ar Fawrth 1 ac ar eu pererindod, dathlant ei anogaeth yn ddyddiol. Y strwythur hwn o werthoedd yn mywyd pobl yw Cadeirlan Dewi Sant.

Yn ddiweddar daeth adeilad i’n llawenhau - Oriol y Parc - yn gartref i waith Graham Sutherland, arlunydd a ymfalchiai yn nhirlun Dyfed. Mae iddo bensaerniaeth godidog. Elfennau tirlun yn ôl Sutherland yw tywydd, anifeiliaid, pobl, gwaith, planhigion, diwydiant, ac adeiladau. Mae’n siwr fod y Nawddsant wrth ei fodd. Cymaint â ni.

Dewi Lloyd Lewis

## ★ ENGLISH SILKS WORN IN TREDEGAR HOUSE



Silver embroidered blue damask court mantua (an open fronted gown with an elaborate train), made between about 1730-40.

**In the 18th century a gentleman's rank in society could be discerned from the quality of his house or his clothing - status was declared by the wearing of costly silks, lace or gold thread. Silks woven in the flourishing silk industry of Spitalfields in London and elsewhere were bought by Welsh families and brought to Wales to furnish their homes, dress themselves, and impress their neighbours.**

The Morgans of Tredegar House, later Lords Tredegar, were one of the wealthiest families in Wales. They used rich silk furnishings in their home, as described in the inventory of 1698:

*"4 green Silke Damask chequer curtains flowred with gold colour and lined with white chequer silke with double valiance, foot valiance, teaster and quilte imbroidred with Silke frings."*

In the same bedroom there were four window curtains of white damask and seven silk cushions matching the bed hangings, all protected by a suite of orange dust covers. In addition, the Morgans dressed themselves in the finest and most fashionable woven damasks and brocaded silks, some of which are now housed at St Fagans: National History Museum, donated in 1923 by Lord Tredegar. Most date to the middle of the 18th century.

One robe and petticoat of French origin may have belonged to Martha Morgan, wife of Thomas Morgan, part of the Mansel family of Margam (and later of Penrice), one

of the wealthiest families in the county. Thomas Morgan was succeeded by his brother, who considerably added to the estates. When his son, Sir William Morgan, inherited in 1719, he was able to embark upon a very flamboyant way of life.

In 1724 Sir William married Lady Rachel Cavendish, daughter of the Duke of Devonshire, who brought with her a dowry of £20,000. A number of items from Tredegar House date from between 1720 and 1731, when Sir William died. All of these garments match Sir William's reputation for extravagance - his annual expenditure in 1725 amounted to £37,418 (over £3.8 million in today's terms) - and all would almost certainly have been bought in London. Lady Rachel survived her husband for fifty years, and when her only son died unmarried in 1763, she lost a battle in the courts and her brother-in-law Thomas Morgan succeeded to the estate.

Most of the remaining Tredegar garments belong to this period and were probably worn by Lady Rachel or Jane, the grand-daughter of John Morgan (born 1731), who had married in 1758 and was later to inherit the estate. Since none of the Tredegar silks post-date Lady Rachel's life it is tempting to conclude that they all belonged to her and were packed away after her time, only being rediscovered by the family for their fancy dress possibilities during the following century.

### A court mantua

This pictured garment had been remade and worn as fancy dress, probably during the 19th century. In 1971 it was returned to its original form, with the help of the late Janet Arnold. The later stitching was removed, which involved unpicking bust darts and the removal of stitching where the train had been caught up in several places, presumably in order to hide the fact that part of it had been cut away. The petticoat itself had not been altered. This is a very grand robe which would have been worn for presentation at court. Lady Rachel Morgan was certainly sufficiently important to have worn it.

### Elen Phillips

#### Background Reading

Janet Arnold, *A court mantua of c. 1740* in *Costume, vol. 6, p48-52 (1972)*.

M. R. Apted, *Social conditions at Tredegar House Newport in the 17th and 18th centuries* in *Monmouthshire Antiquarian, vol. 3:2, p124-54 (1972-3)*.

David Freeman, *Tredegar House* (Newport Leisure Services Department, 1982, revised edition 1998).

Natalie Rothstein, *Silk designs of the 18th century in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum* (Victoria and Albert Museum, 1990).

Natalie Rothstein, *Woven Textile Design in Britain to 1750* (Victoria and Albert Museum, 1994).

## Educators and Curators: The Early Days of the Museum Schools Service in Cardiff

Donald Moore

The Education Service of Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales - celebrates its 60th anniversary in 2009. It was founded as 'The Museum Schools Service' in 1949, and restructured a decade or so ago with a different title. However, it still promotes the use and understanding of the Museum and all its branches among juveniles. The following is an account of how it all began - a pioneering venture, launched when museums had little experience of structured educational programmes.

The Education Act of 1944 reformed secondary education in England and Wales, creating Grammar, Modern and Technical categories, to be of equal esteem and quality. Wales was proud of its existing grammar schools and technical colleges. Now the challenge was also to provide for less academic pupils. Schools would be encouraged to extend their activities and seek assistance from new sources, such as museums.

Wales had its own 'National Museum' in Cardiff, founded by Royal Charter in 1907, briefed to collect, study, preserve and display objects characteristic of Wales. It was organised in six departments: Geology, Botany, Zoology, Archaeology, Art and Industry, with an incipient outstation at St Fagans for 'Folk Life'. The public galleries were full of displays, but much material remained in reserve.

A museum's task was to discover the meaning of things, and things have a special appeal to children. It was thought that the collections of the National Museum could improve teaching and learning in conventional subjects and create aspirations beyond the curriculum. The Director of the National Museum, Sir Cyril Fox, produced a paper on the creation of a Museum Schools Service for Wales, to be based in the Museum in Cardiff. The creative input was to be provided by subject officers, who would already be trained teachers. One would be 'attached' to each museum department. The first appointments were made in 1949, an officer in Archaeology [Alice Williams] and one in Geology [D. Emlyn Evans]. Others followed year by year.

However, problems emerged. Conflict as well as collaboration characterised the early years of activity. There was a basic issue of 'attitude'. Specimens were in the charge of keepers, and keepers were paid to 'keep'. Teachers were paid to 'give away' everything they knew. These two different roles foreshadowed potential conflict.

A more practical issue was space. The huge entrance hall was full of space, but most of it was ornamental. On the periphery were offices, in the basement workshops and storage areas. Room had now to be found for a new organisation. Each department agreed to accommodate

one officer. The officers would eventually need supporting staff to prepare exhibits and organise their reception. The loan service would be aimed at secondary schools but reception facilities would be offered to all.

A new problem emerged as more officers were appointed to develop each museum subject. They found no inexhaustible store of specimens suitable for schools. The loan service needed more examples of some objects than were available, and many items that the Museum did not collect at all.



A demonstration of specimens for teachers in the Reception Room, c. 1960, showing characteristic arrangement of tables in hollow square. Photo: Museum Schools Service.

In Geology the limited reserves of coal, fossils etc. could be supplemented by fresh collecting. Geological models were produced in house. In Zoology, most animal specimens decayed quickly, so replicas were offered. In Botany, live plants were not suitable for lending, so pressed plants, artists' prints and new models were assembled.

In Archaeology, specimens of Welsh provenance were not allowed to leave the museum, but items found outside Wales could be freely circulated. The Art collection was connoisseur-related, and scarcely relevant to the classroom. Schools wanted works by contemporary Welsh artists, which the Museum was not then collecting, and which the Schools Service now had to buy. The fledgling department of Industry had pieces of industrial machinery, impossible to use in class, but the personal equipment of coal or slate miners made an instant impression on children.

The loan service soon absorbed the greater share of resources. Portable exhibits were listed in subject catalogues. Teachers would make requests on application cards, to be processed by the officers on gigantic allocation boards. Exhibits had to be allocated rapidly at the end of each term, in order to ensure delivery early in the next.

Financing the Service was complicated. It was housed and administered by the Museum, and the Director of the Museum, by then Dr D. Dillwyn John, was designated Chief Executive Officer. The Museum itself was funded by H.M. Treasury, but such funds could not be used to run

## PEREGRINE UPDATE

the Schools Service, since education was the responsibility of local education authorities (LEAs). Subscriptions therefore had to be secured from the LEAs by the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC). There were then thirteen counties in Wales (including Monmouthshire) responsible for education, plus a few special areas within those counties functioning as separate education authorities.

The Schools Service eventually became bigger than any department in Cathays Park. There were astonishing successes, recorded in successive issues of the Museum's Annual Report. By 1970 all museum departments, including the Folk Museum, were in some way participating in the Schools Service. All Welsh LEAs were at last within the fold. All secondary schools could receive substantial loans of exhibits every term. Teacher training establishments in Wales received an annual lecture by an officer on using museums. Primary schools were served by large travelling displays, set up in convenient centres for local classes to attend. Children of all ages came to the Museum at Cardiff and its branches for introductory or subject visits.



A school group in the archaeology gallery, c. 1960.

For a long time the National Museum of Wales at Cardiff was pre-eminent in the scale of its educational programme. Its fame spread abroad and members of staff were invited to advise other countries on setting up their own museum education services. The Schools Service at Cardiff had been launched in the early days of peace after World War II to improve educational and cultural facilities in a new field. The staff believed that inspiration and understanding could flow from the study of museum specimens and works of art, and they did their utmost to provide new and stimulating experiences.

The reorganisation of local government in 1974, followed by the establishment of Unitary Authorities in 1996 proved inimical to the survival of the Museum Schools Service as then constituted. The National Museum thereupon set up a new service, no longer dependant on annual LEA grants.

Donald Moore was one of the earliest Schools Service Officers at the National Museum of Wales; he was appointed Officer in Archaeology in 1953 and became Senior Officer in 1970, responsible for managing the whole service. He left the Museum in 1977 to become Keeper of Pictures and Maps in the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth.



Dewi Bowen, *Peregrine Falcon* (Pen and ink drawing, 22.8cm x 16.5cm). Reproduced by kind permission of the artist.

The naming of the two peregrines as Gavin and Stacey, seems to have led to as dramatic a relationship for them as for their human TV counterparts.

They returned again this year to the City Hall clock tower in Cardiff. In April they began to incubate a clutch of eggs in the nest from the previous year. However, by the beginning of May their behaviour began to suggest that the eggs had failed to hatch and then, on top of that, the nest was dislodged by a storm.

Undeterred, the pair moved to another ledge above the clock on the north face of the tower and built a second nest. Unfortunately, although there was considerable courtship display between the two of them it did not result in a second clutch of eggs. The peregrines, though, continued to stay around the clock tower during the whole of the summer even though they had no chicks to raise.

The RSPB had a display area in the Museum until the end of August. Not only did they have a web camera on the new nest but their staff were also able to lend telescopes and binoculars for those who wanted closer encounters.

Diane Davies

