A MESSAGE TO OUR READERS

Welcome to this the first of our biannual Newsletters with the next edition due in September. That means a bigger newsletter but we hope one still with the usual mix of major articles, shorter pieces and news of Museum, Friends and BafM activities.

Centenaries seem to loom large in this edition. The most obvious one is the start of the First World War and the next four years will see a host of exhibitions and activities organised by the Museum. So we are very pleased to have an article on those plans and how the focus will be on the stories of ordinary men and women. 1914 also saw the death of one of Wales' brightest artistic talents, James Dickson Innes, and this year sees both a new book on his life and work as well an exhibition of his work and we mark that by an article of the painter. The two pictures we have chosen for the front and back covers also fit into the centenary theme and there is an item that gives some background about the pictures and the artists who painted them.

Another major article is on Thomas Henry Thomas, a formidable polymath, and important as a driving force behind the setting up of the National Museum. The article traces his life and work and explores the range of his interests and the collections he amassed. Indeed, many of the items that the fledging Museum was able to display were down to his bequests.

The third major article is on the birthplace of one person who perhaps did more to save the Welsh language than any other. That person was, of course, William Morgan who in 1582 translated the bible into Welsh. The article looks at the architectural importance of Ty Mawr near Betws-y-Coed but also traces the his life and career - he ended up as Bishop of Llandaff.

As usual we must thank Graham Davies for allowing us to reproduce articles from the Rhagor page the Museum's website. These article are important as they allow us to illustrate the breadth of work carried out by the Museum as well as the variety of its interests and holdings. So we have an article looking at how research at the Museum has developed a technique to determine the potential dangers posed by old botanical specimens because of the mercury compounds used to treat these specimens. Then there is an article on one of Britain's rarest orchids, the Ghost Orchid; the article outlines the finding of specimens and why such rare specimens, which ought to be left in the wild, have come to have a home in the Museum. The third introduces the subject of railway posters from the 1930's and 1940's. We would recommend a visit to the "Images of Industry" page of the Museum's website where you can browse through the Museum's collection where you will see that some of collection are artistic creations in their own right.

The other short piece is a characteristic contribution from Dewi Bowen, this one on Daniel Defoe's travels in Wales complete with a charming pen and ink imaging of his sojourn outside Merthyr Tydfil.

As usual we have sections devoted to Museum, Friends and BafM news plus a Book review. The Friends section also includes two reports on Friends' trips: one is about the week-long trip to Tuscany exploring its gardens and houses and the other about a day-trip to the National Collection Centre at Nantgarw, a branch of the Museum that is often overlooked, undeservedly as it turns out.

Finally, we must announce that Judy has decided to step down as a Co-editor making this edition the last under our joint stewardship. So new seems a very good time to ask you, our readers, whether one of you would be interested in being involved in helping to put together the Newsletter. What is needed is not someone to write articles but rather someone who can persuade, cajole, bribe(?) others to do so or someone who can unearth material that can be used in the Newsletter; then there is the job of getting the material ready for the printers where being involved means helping to select images (images are as important as words) and of course checking all is correct. If you are interested or would just like to know more, contact details are on the opposite page.

Diane Davies and Judy Edwards

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

A hot topic in the arts world these days is the London bias in culture funding. It is an imbalance that has always existed but a recent independent report "Rebalancing Our Cultural Capital" has highlighted the actual numbers involved. In 2012/13 London received £86 of taxpayer and lottery funding per head of population while the rest of the country got £8. Yet it is in those parts of the UK where people are less well-off that the population tend to spend more on National Lottery tickets. Speaking at the Museums Association conference at the end of last year David Anderson, Director General of Amgueddfa Cymru and President of the Association, commented that similarly "wealth attracts wealth, while poverty begets poverty" where public and philanthropic giving is concerned. David expressed the belief, for which there exists ample evidence, that the present situation is inequitable, the more so because the economic cuts are hitting hardest in those parts of the UK that already have the least cultural provision.

It is not all doom and gloom however. Let us remember that the redevelopment of St Fagans, the "Making History Project", has attracted the largest Heritage Lottery Fund grant ever awarded in Wales. The enterprise will see the
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Back Cover: James Dickson Innes, Girl Standing by a Lake (Oil on panel, 38cm x 29cm, 1911-12)

spectacular new realisation of the main building to include a roofed atrium and a Centre for Learning. There will be greatly enhanced access to the numerous artefacts the Museum possesses and, in the long run, the reconstruction of historic buildings that would otherwise be lost for all time. These include Raglan railway station, the police station from Taff’s Well and Cardiff’s Vulcan Pub.

Friends’ subscriptions were due on 1st March and cards have been forwarded to those who have already renewed their membership. Some Friends did not amend their standing orders in March last year and as a result have not paid the correct subscription. Their details have perforce been removed from our mailing list as from the end of last year. Further information about this is included in Friends News.

So the Oxford Dictionary people have nominated ‘selfie’ as word of choice for the year 2013. (For the uninitiated, if any remain, a selfie is a self-portrait photograph typically taken on a smartphone or webcam.) I cringe when I encounter ‘footie’ or ‘footy’ (what is wrong with ‘soccer’?) and ‘foodie’, to which we must now add ‘selfie’. ‘Luvvie’, ‘onesie’, ‘hoodie’ and ‘indie’ similarly grate. Can I be alone in deploring this apparent infantilisation of the language? Perhaps the Friends Newsletter and Magazine should be rebranded as the ‘Newsie’.

Roger Gagg

Next Edition
Contributions for inclusion in the September 2014 edition should be submitted by the beginning of July 2014.

Please send items, either electronically or by post, to the Editor:

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WANTED
Volunteer to help in the production of the Newsletter.

No experience required, just enthusiasm

Interested?

Contact the Editor as above
First World War Commemoration

Pip Diment

In this article I will introduce you to the programme of exhibitions, learning activities, events, digital resources and publications Amgueddfa Cymru is planning to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the First World War between 2014 and 2019. I will focus mainly on the programme for the first two years of the period of commemoration. Launch events will be held at all our museum sites in spring 2014 to raise awareness of the programme of activities and begin the commemoration. At these events we will invite people to join us at our museums to sow poppy seeds and remember those who have fallen in all wars. The poppies will provide an annual reminder and potential remembrance-gathering place during the whole commemoration period.

We have thought deeply about what the underpinning philosophy of our engagement programme should be in order to create a working framework. We want to tell the stories of the people of Wales to explore the unique areas of impact on Wales and on Welsh life and to better understand the key events and the legacy today through Amgueddfa Cymru’s collections. We will reflect on, and respond to, key events such as: the outbreak of war, Mametz Wood, Passchendaele, the death of Hedd Wyn and the end of war, focussing especially on remembrance and recovery.

We have identified the following main themes to draw the strands of the diverse projects together:• The Call to War: how and why the people of Wales responded to the call to war;
• Living through War: the impact for people at home and those fighting and working in the arenas of war, loss and remembrance; and
• Transformation through War: the changing skills, attitudes and beliefs during and immediately post war.

Through these themes we will draw out key stories that illuminate the Welsh experience and perspective of the First World War and the universal elements of war. We are also planning a series of publications along the lines of Glo.

There was a low key launch of our programme on Saturday, 9 November 2013, when a Remembrance Service was held at the Newbridge War Memorial at St Fagans National History Museum. Afterwards at Oakdale Workman’s Institute museum curators shared stories, information on events and showed objects that will form part of our commemorative programme.

The first exhibition to open at National Museum Cardiff will be Efforts and Ideals: Prints of the First World War from 2nd August 2014. This exhibition is an opportunity to show a series of sixty-six lithographic prints from the Museum’s collection called The Great War: Britain’s Efforts and Ideals.

The series was commissioned by the Ministry of Information in 1917, with the aim of encouraging a war-weary public and raising support for the war-effort, especially in the USA. The collection was presented to the museum in 1919 and is made up of two series of portfolios; ‘Ideals’ and ‘Efforts’.

Twelve artists contributed to the ‘Ideals’ portfolio, including some of the best known British artists of the period, such as Augustus John, Frank Brangwyn, George Clausen and William Nicholson. The prints in this section address dramatic and symbolic subjects, such as The Freedom of the Seas, The Reconstruction of Belgium and The Triumph of Democracy.

The ‘Efforts’ portfolio were divided into nine headings: Making Soldiers, Making Sailors, Making Guns, Building Ships, Building Aircraft, Transport By Sea, Women’s Work, Work on the Land and Tending the Wounded. One artist undertook the commission for each heading, producing six prints on the given theme. The artists commissioned for this part of the series included Eric Kennington, Frank Brangwyn, William Rothenstein and the celebrated printmakers Muirhead Bone and C.R.W. Nevinson, whose images of industrial production and aerial combat under Building Aircraft are a particular highlight.

Colleagues at the National Roman Legion Museum in Caerleon begin their commemorations with an exhibition on Equus; The Horse at War which looks at Roman warhorses and fittings with com-
parisons to horses in the First World War. This follows the Wales Millennium Centre’s performance of ‘War Horse’ and the recent find of a horse’s head gear at the Priory Field excavations. To accompany the exhibition there will be activities such as enamelling workshops, mask making pendants and a talk on the horse in war.

Their following exhibition, January 2015, looks at “Death at a Distance” seeing how weapons for long range fighting, such as the catapults and archery, have changed through time from the Romans to the First World War. It will also examine the consequences of this form of warfare on the soldiers who fought. This exhibition will be enhanced by archery workshops, an Arthur Machen talk, an annual Lecture and activities on making and using artillery.

Cychwyn Cofio (Starting to Remember) opens in July 2014 at National Slate Museum and will be an appeal across slate quarrying communities for information about the War and its influence on peoples’ lives. This will support and complement the work on the following two exhibitions later in the programme. The first, For Freedom and for Empire in 2015, explores reactions to the recruitment campaigns in the slate quarrying communities. Recent historical research has indicated that support across Wales for recruitment campaigns was by no means as strong as has been traditionally postulated. The second, Cofeb entails working with the local community to discover more about those listed on the memorial at Penyrosedd Quarry and whether they have descendants living in the area. Cofeb will open up the subject of memorialising the men: who decided that this would be a workplace-based memorial? Who paid for it? Who decided what would be carved?

In the National Wool Museum at Drefach plans are well underway for A Dark Cloud over the Woollen Industry. This project explores the desperation of the woollen mills, who needed weaving contracts during the War to keep the mills open, and the use of Welsh national identity for recruitment. The Welsh Army Corps wanted to promote a Welsh national identity by clothing the new army in native home-spun cloth – ‘Brethyn Llwyd’, which was short lived and never used for active service.

When Dai became Tommy at Big Pit; National Coal Museum in February 2015 investigates the personal stories of miners who went to war as tunnellers. It aims to involve communities by asking them for personal stories from their families in all fields of war.

Poppies for Remembrance is being created with Natural Science curators and will investigate the link between the
cultural uses of poppies for remembrance and the science of biodiversity. There will be opportunities for linking to the planting poppies project and working with communities in acts of remembrance throughout the five years and across all our museums in Wales.

National Waterfront Museum Swansea are generating *Welsh Industry and the Great War* a touring exhibition examining the effect of the Great War on Welsh industry, and the contribution of Welsh industry to Britain’s war effort.

Later, in 2016, to commemorate the battle of Mametz Wood, we are looking to display *The Welsh at Mametz Wood* by Christopher Williams at National Museum Cardiff.

Whilst St Fagans National History Museum is being redeveloped there are plans for trails around the castle highlighting its use as a hospital during the First World War, and around the historic buildings telling stories of the people who lived or worked in them. We are also opening the new galleries in 2016 with a section on Conflict and the First World War.

We are planning to put together an exhibition of the visual arts, literature and music as explored through the prism of war: *Experiences of Armageddon: Wales, the Arts and the First World War* for the end of the commemoration period, projects are being planned covering Hedd Wyn, David Jones, postcards from First World War and a recreation of the Victory Ball at Oakdale Workmen’s Institute at St. Fagans National History Museum in 2019.

There are many other activities, events and exhibitions being planned and confirmed as I write, that will be hosted at all Amgueddfa Cymru sites. We are already working with or planning to work with the CyMAL, BBC, National Portrait Gallery, National Library Wales, Wales for Peace, Wrexham Museum, Snowdonia National Park Authority and others to share our research, expertise and collections with a wider audience.

Christopher Williams *The Charge of the Welsh Division at Mametz Wood, 11th July 1916* (Oil on canvas, 173cm x 274cm, 1916)

**MADNESS NOT TO STAY SAFE AROUND MERCURY**

Natural history collections are susceptible to deterioration from pests and moulds and so historically, chemicals have been applied to safeguard these collections for the future. The most common chemical application to botanical specimens was Mercuric chloride (Corrosive sublimate). Mercury has helped to preserve specimens up until the present day, but these treatments leave a legacy: salts of mercury are not only toxic to pests, but also to people.
In the 19th century, the felt-hat industry commonly used mercuric nitrate to cure the felt. The wearer and the hat maker were then exposed to mercury which is now known to attack the central nervous system and affect the brain. The unusual behaviour attributed to hat makers, due to the mercury poisoning, gave rise to the term ‘Mad as a hatter’ and probably fuelled Lewis Carroll’s imagination for his ‘mad tea party.’

The main problem encountered with these treatments is that they are hazardous to health but largely imperceptible to the human eye. Research conducted at the National Museum Wales department of Conservation, uncovered that some of the 600,000 herbarium specimens housed within the collections were contaminated with mercury. This could pose a potential risk to the health of staff members and visitors to the collections, unless addressed. It was important to be able to establish which sheets had been treated, what the chemical was and how much was present. To do this in the usual way would have involved specialist chemists, expensive analytical equipment and years of work; an expensive and timely process.

Continuing research into this issue by Dr Vicky Purewal, the botanical conservator at the National Museum Wales, uncovered that chemical processes are accelerated by mercury in the ageing papers, providing tiny clues to the presence of mercury. By devising a specific novel technique, these tiny clues can be translated into real information. This technique does not require expensive analytical equipment, all it needs is a simple hand held UV-A lamp. The Ultra violet radiation causes certain chemical processes in the paper to fluoresce a definite colour providing a positive response to the presence of mercury.

This research by the museum has been vital in developing a rapid technique in identifying contaminated collections. It has helped provide information on the historic treatments that the specimen has undergone and as a result helped to safeguard the health of staff members and visitors to the herbarium. As a result the collections can be separated into treated and non-treated material. The contaminated collections can then be handled appropriately and re-mounted removing a large amount of the contamination from the herbarium environment. DNA analysis currently carried out by researchers within the NMW herbarium; also find the UV technique extremely efficient at helping to determine whether the collections have been subjected to mercury applications which may interfere with extraction of genetic information.

The impact of this research is two-fold: on professional conservation and curatorial practice; and on the health and safety of the collection users when working within the herbarium. Key institutions such as the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, the Natural History Museum, London and the Royal College of Physicians are just a few of the other organisations that have benefitted from this simple and rapid identification tool developed by Vicky Purewal at the National Museum Wales.

Victoria Purewal

Victoria Purewal is the botanical conservator at the National Museum Wales
DANIEL DEFOE IN WALES

The late 17th and early 18th century was a golden age in English journalism. Daniel Defoe, the famous author of *Robinson Crusoe*, a story that for three hundred years has delighted and inspired both young and old, was a journalist able to skilfully churn out readable pamphlets and newspapers on any subject. His eventful life included a long period in the service of two monarchs: Queen Anne and William of Orange. When a survey was required of Queen Anne’s Britain and its everyday life, her thoughts turned to Daniel Defoe riding solitary and observant through the countryside. It became one of his tasks between 1724 and 1725 to traverse Britain on one such tour of reconnaissance. In the inns of market towns he would write his reports. He was a Nonconformist, a realist, a man of the people and on Sundays would attend the Dissenters Chapel, observant of his fellow worshippers and inquisitive of their business affairs. The accounts he gives of Britain of Queen Anne’s reign in *A Tour Thro’ the Whole Island of Great Britain* are a treasure for the historian.

When he visited Brecon and braved the narrow pitted and rock strewn tracks through the Beacons he wrote “The English jestingly (and I think not very improperly) call it Break-neck-shire: tis mountainous to an Extremity”. Later when walking below the towering cliffs of the Darren Fawr Cwmtaf near Cefn Coed, he was filled with extreme fear and thought of leaving Wales out of his circuit. But eventually he came to the bare, windswept open moorland overlooking the Merthyr Tydfil valley which he described as “… a most agreeable Vale, opening to the South and a pleasant River running through it, call’d the Taaffe”.

At the head of the Taff valley was the peaceful hamlet of Merthyr Tydfil where nature reigned unchallenged. The thickly wooded mountains overlooking Merthyr abounded with wildlife and birdsong and the crystal clear waters of the river Taff teemed with trout and salmon. The people inhabiting this pristine world of nature were self-sufficient, lived in thatched cottages and scattered farms, worshipped at St. Tydfil’s church and used the corn mill. They earned their living from the land, growing vegetables and herbs, rearing sheep, goats, pigs and cattle, using oxen to plough their fields.

Both the knitting of stockings and weaving were carried out in the homes of the cottagers. Wool from sheep was spun and woven into cloth or flannel and then bleached. The Welsh speaking community ties were strong and strangers were invariably viewed with suspicion and fear.

Dewi Bowen
T. H. THOMAS (1839-1915):
A FOUNDING FATHER OF THE
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WALES

Christabel Hutchings

Thomas Henry Thomas is regarded as one of the founding fathers of the National Museum of Wales. He grew up at Penygarn above Pontypool, where his father was president of the Baptist College. He trained as an artist in Bristol and London and worked as an artist and art lecturer. Thomas’s wife Ellen died in 1879 following a still birth and in 1881 he inherited his father’s house in Cardiff and lived permanently in Wales. He became closely involved in the Welsh cultural renaissance which saw a flowering of culture before the First World War. Like many antiquarians of his day he was a multi-faceted man and was interested in a range of subjects such as geology, archaeology, biology, botany and folklore. However, these interests stemmed from his interest in art.

Although he studied at the Royal Academy Schools he never became an academician but he became a fellow of the Royal Cambrian Academy of Art, established in 1881, and was proud to place ‘RCA’ after his name. As a cultural nationalist, Thomas instigated a campaign to see the red dragon emblem on the Royal Standard and, although this was never achieved, pressure from Thomas’s committee led to the acceptance of the red dragon on the badge of the Prince of Wales in 1901 and led to the design of the Welsh flag which eventually gained official status in 1953. He also became involved in the National Eisteddfod Association and was elected as the first Herald Bard of the Gorsedd in 1895. As an artist and journalist for The Graphic and The Daily Graphic he illustrated and wrote articles which placed Welsh affairs and Welsh culture before the British public.

The campaign for a National Museum for Wales was part of the flowering of Welsh cultural nationalism which took place before the First World War. Traditionally museums collected, preserved and shared collections but were particularly important in establishing the identity of nation.
states, such as Wales, which struggled to preserve a separate cultural entity. Whereas Scotland and Ireland had gained national museums in 1854 and 1877, Wales had to wait until 1907. Thomas’s involvement with Cardiff Museum committee came through his membership of Cardiff Naturalists’ Society which provided honorary curators. His commitment to the Museum is shown by his yearly donations to the Municipal and National Museums’ collections from 1879 until his death. His Welsh-speaking background and membership of Cymmrodorion Caerdydd meant he straddled the Welsh and anglicised sections of Cardiff’s elite. Thomas had advocated a National Museum at the 1893 Pontypridd Eisteddfod and from 1894 to 1905 a good natured ‘battle’ took place between Thomas and Court physician and bibliophile Sir John Williams, for the location of the National Museum and National Library. Thomas promoted Cardiff and Sir John advocated Aberystwyth, but while Thomas’s main concern was the location of the National Museum, Sir John’s was the location of the National Library.

By 1898, Cardiff’s Municipal Museum was increasingly being regarded as the ‘National Museum of Wales’. In 1899, Cardiff Council’s Parliamentary Committee offered land available in Cathays Park for the proposed National Museum, a half-penny rate contribution towards its maintenance and the Municipal Museum’s collections. In 1902 a petition requested a grant for the establishment and maintenance of a National Museum and National Library and in the same year, Cardiff’s Museum was renamed the ‘Welsh Museum of Natural History, Arts and Antiquities’ which was a statement of its intention to become the National Museum. Thomas was a vociferous public advocate for the location of the National Museum. He argued that Cardiff was the logical choice owing to its size, accessibility, energy of the town, wide-ranging Museum collections, the financial support of Cardiff Council and the highly qualified staff and officials. In 1904 the Government agreed to provide finance once the location of the organisations had been settled. In 1905 the Privy Council decided to locate the National Museum at Cardiff and the National Library at Aberystwyth. In 1905, at the National Eisteddfod at Mountain Ash, Thomas’s made some important points about the future museum. He wanted the new museum to be staffed by Welsh people or people closely connected to Wales. He also argued that the museum should be placed in a capital city, but he was ahead of his time, as although Cardiff became a city in 1905 it did not become the capital city until 1955.

When the National Museum of Wales was established by Royal Charter in 1907, its stated objective was "the complete illustration of the geology, mineralogy, zoology, botany, ethnography, archaeology, art history and special industries of Wales", all topics of interest to Thomas. He represented the Council of University College Cardiff at the first meeting of the National Museum’s Court of Governors. He also sat on the Council, the General Purposes Committee, the Finance and Building committees and by 1911 he was also a member of the Special Grants and Reception committees. Dr William Evans Hoyle became the Museum’s first director in 1909 and the site at Cathays Park was leased to the National Museum by the Marquess of Bute in 1910. In the same year, the London firm of Arnold Dunbar Smith and Cecil Brewer won the contract for the building’s design in open competition. In 1912 Cardiff’s Municipal Museum’s collection was handed over to the National Museum, but until 1924 the collections still existed within the Cardiff Library building in Trinity Street with a temporary exhibition area in the newly built City Hall at Cathays Park. Thus Thomas never saw the completion of the building, but he influenced the design by suggesting that as well as lions on the roof of the building there should also be dragons. Furthermore, Thomas’s continuing campaign to encourage the use of the dragon emblem ensured that his friend, artist Goscumbe John’s design for the National Museum’s seal included a dragon.

Many of Thomas’s Municipal Museum acquisitions became part of the National Museum of Wales’s collections. One of the prize possessions of the National Museum is the first trace fossil of dinosaur footprints to be discovered in Wales which Thomas identified at Newton Nottage in 1878. Thomas recognised the need to collect items that reflected Welsh culture and created a national Welsh col-
lection from both north and south Wales. In 1893, John Ward became curator of Cardiff Museum and was the first Keeper of Archaeology at the National Museum from 1912-22. Thomas and Ward had much in common and were interested in early-medieval inscribed and decorated stones (see Fig. 1). In 1894 Cardiff Museum followed Thomas’s suggestion and began creating casts of these stones which have proved a valuable research resource for the National Museum.

As Herald Bard of the Gorsedd Thomas had created and fostered Eisteddfod regalia and in 1899 he was instrumental in getting the items deposited at the Museum when not in use. Thus regalia such as Thomas’s Eisteddfod banner (see Fig 2) and Goscombe John’s Hirlas Horn can be viewed at St Fagans. In 1903 Thomas and Ward began an extensive collection of Pontypool Japanware. They also collaborated in the collection of ‘bygones’, or popular antiquities. The bygones collection was essentially a response to industrialisation which had resulted in the decline of hand-crafted artefacts and was also an attempt to define and promote Welsh culture. By 1898 this collection was known as the “T. H. Thomas Collection”. Thomas’s collection of ‘folk’ items extended to Welsh musical instruments such as the pibgorn, a horned instrument, and the crwth, an ancient type of stringed instrument. He also promoted the collection of Welsh harps. In 1913, an exhibition of Welsh antiquities’ or ‘Byegones’ took place in Cardiff’s City Hall. Fourteen years after his death, in 1929, there was another exhibition and Sir Cyril Fox referred to the “foresight, zeal and public spirit” of Thomas in the Guide to the Collection of Welsh Bygones. Thomas’s bygone collection developed into Iorwerth Peate’s ‘folk collections’ and in 1948 Peate was appointed Keeper-in-Charge (later Curator) of the new Folk Museum created in the grounds of St Fagans Castle. Many of Thomas’s ‘Bygones’ were still on display at St Fagans as late as 2005 when they were removed to make space for the new Oriel 1 Gallery which reflects a more up to date interpretation of Welsh cultural identity.

Thomas’s major interest was art and Thomas helped curate the Municipal Museum’s art collection. As an artist and cultural nationalist, Thomas was concerned that the National Museum should represent Welsh art, but there were problems; the scarcity of really good artists in Wales and the need to define a Welsh artist. Thomas realised it was necessary to use a broad definition. In 1914, Thomas chaired a committee which set up an exhibition of modern artists of Welsh birth or extraction’. The public were surprised to find so many eminent artists represented in the collection. However, out of thirty-six artists, less than half were born in Wales and the majority were of varying degrees of Welsh descent. Although Thomas had extensively researched Welsh art and artists, he never published a collection of his extensive knowledge. Nevertheless, he made his research available to others and Mardy Rees relied heavily on Thomas when he compiled his book Welsh Painters. Thomas also had a collection of work by Welsh artists at his home in Cardiff which was bequeathed to the National Museum following his death. His collection consisted of the work of artists whose careers he had encouraged, such as Cardiff-born sculptor Goscombe John (1860-1952) and Maesteg-born artist Christopher Williams (1873-1934) who painted an oil painting of Thomas in 1902 (see Fig. 3). Thomas’s collection of over 1,000 prints, drawings and watercolours was donated to the museum following his death. They consist of many aspects of art he produced as artist for the Graphic, and sketches for book illustration, such as for Wirt Sikes, British Goblins. He also produced twelve watercolour illustrations which showed the processes of tin-plate production at Trefforest Tin-plate Works (see Fig. 4).

Although Thomas was concerned to promote Welsh art, he also recognised the importance of British and international art in fostering art appreciation. The National Museum foundation charters enshrined the principle of collecting fine art regardless of national origin. It was Thomas who first invited art-critic Frederick Wedmore to Cardiff to adjudicate Eisteddfod and Cardiff art competitions in 1883 and 1884. Both Thomas and Wedmore became involved with philanthropist and art collector, Pyke Thompson, who was a director of Spiller & Co, Cardiff. He built the Turner House, Penarth, to house his British and international art collection which contained works by Turner and Rossetti as well as a collection of porcelain. However, the collection did not become part of the National Museum until 1921. Following Pyke
Thompson’s death in 1897, Pyke Thompson’s executors unconditionally offered a large bequest of art to Cardiff art gallery which eventually became the property of the National Museum and Frederick Wedmore consulted with Thomas when purchasing art using the Pyke Thompson fund.

Although Thomas witnessed the laying of the National Museum’s foundation stone in 1912, he did not live to see the completion of the neo-classical building at Cathays Park as construction ceased during the First World War and the National Museum was not opened to the public until 1927. Thomas died in his sleep on 5th July 1915, following a heart attack. On his death the Court of the National Museum recorded in its Annual Report, “...heartfelt regret at the death of Mr Thomas Henry Thomas, R.C.A., who had been one of the first members of the Court and Council of the Museum, and had always manifested most helpful interest in its welfare.” His funeral took place on 9th July and he was buried, with his wife, beneath the Celtic cross he had designed in the nonconformist-section of Cathays Cemetery, Cardiff. Thomas believed in the importance of national symbols. The ubiquitous Welsh dragon flag, which owes so much to Thomas, flies above the National Museum Wales and both are symbols of the cultural revival of Wales which was so close to his heart and in which he played such an important part.

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The Welsh National Herbarium at Amguedfa Cymru has a small, but very precious, collection of Ghost Orchids (Epipogium aphyllum Sw.). Is this something to be proud of or should they have been left in the wild? The answer lies in the donations to the Museum, and slugs...

Ghost Orchids are among the rarest plants in Britain. They have been found in about 11 sites in the Chilterns and West Midlands in England, but such is their rarity and the secrecy surrounding them that it is difficult to be sure exactly how many sites there are.

Regarded as extinct

Ghost Orchids were first discovered in Britain in 1854 but were only seen 11 times before the 1950s. They were seen regularly in a few Chilterns sites between 1953 and 1987 but then disappeared and were regarded as extinct until one plant was discovered in 2009. In most sites they have only been seen once, and rarely for more than ten years in any one site.

Ghost orchids - a fleeting occurrence in dark, shaded woods

Ghost Orchids get their name from their creamy-white to pinkish-brown colour and their fleeting occurrences in dark, shaded woods. The colour results from the absence of chlorophyll, as they are parasites of fungi associated with tree roots, and they do not need to photosynthesise their own food. They spend most of their lives as rhizomes (underground shoots) in the soil or leaf litter of woodlands, and flowering shoots only occasionally appear above ground. Even then, their small size (usually less than 15cm, rarely up to 23cm) and unpredictable appearance between June and October means that Ghost Orchids are rarely seen.

Until recently the only British specimen held by Amguedfa Cymru was a scrap of rhizome collected for Eleanor Vachell in 1926. Her herbarium is one of the most comprehensive ever put together by a British botanist and she donated her collection to the Museum when she died in 1949. The story of how the fragment of Ghost Orchid was discovered is given in her botanical diary:

"28 May 1926. The telephone bell summoned Mr [Francis] Druce to receive a message from Mr Wilmott of the British Museum. Epipogium aphyllum had been found in Oxfordshire by a young girl and had been shown to Dr [George Claridge] Druce and Mrs Wedgwood. Now Mr Wilmott had found out the name of the wood and was ready to give all information!!! Excitement knew no bounds. Mr Druce rang up Elsie Knowling inviting her to join the search and a taxi was hurriedly summoned to take EV [Eleanor Vachell] and Mr Druce to the British Museum to collect the particulars from Mr Wilmott. The little party walked to the wood where the single specimen had been found and searched diligently that part of the wood marked in the map lent by Mr Wilmott but without success, though they spread out widely in both directions... Completely baffled, the trio, at EV’s suggestion, returned to the town to search for the finder. After many enquiries had been made they were directed to a nice

Elleanor Vachell in the 1930s
house, the home of Mrs I, who was fortunately in when they called. EV acted spokesman. Mrs I was most kind and after giving them a small sketch of the flower told them the name of the street where the girl who had found it lived. Off they started once more. The girl too was at home and there was another flower of Epipogium! In vain did Mr Druce plead with her to part with it but she was adamant! Before long however she had promised to show the place to which she had lead Dr Druce and Mrs Wedgwood and from which the two specimens had been gathered. Off again. This time straight to the right place, but there was nothing to be seen of Epipogium!

2 June 1926. A day to spare! Why not have one more hunt for Epipogium? Arriving at the wood, EV crept stealthily to the exact spot from which the specimen had been taken and kneeling down carefully, with their fingers they removed a little soil, exposing the stem of the orchid, to which were attached tiny tuberous rootlets! Undoubtedly the stem of Dr Druce’s specimen! Making careful measurements for Mr Druce, they replaced the earth, covered the tiny hole with twigs and leaf-mould and fled home triumphant, possessed of a secret that they were forbidden to share with anyone except Mr Druce and Mr Wilmott. A few days later EV received from Mr Druce an excited letter of thanks and a box of earth containing a tiny rootlet that he had found in the exact spot they had indicated."


Eleanor shared the rootlet with her great friend Elsie Knowling, who also had a herbarium. Coincidentally, the two fragments have been reunited at the Museum after being apart for 84 years.

In 1953, Elsie’s son Rex Graham stumbled across 22 Ghost Orchids in a Buckinghamshire wood, the largest colony of ever seen in Britain (Graham 1953). This was the first time that Ghost Orchids had been seen for 20 years and it made the national press. At the time Rex collected only three specimens, but over the next few years he collected more when they were found eaten off by slugs. Eventually Rex had four specimens for his own herbarium, to add to the scrap in his mother’s herbarium. The Ghost Orchids were amongst the treasures in Graham & Harley herbarium, which was donated to Amgueddfa Cymru in 2010.

The third collection is the Museum’s only specimen preserved in spirit (rather than being pressed and dried) so that the three dimensional structure of the flower can be seen. Dr Valerie Richards (formerly Coombs) was looking for wild orchids in Herefordshire in 1982 when she discovered a single ghost orchid in a new site. When she took a local botanist to the site a few days later, a slug had eaten through the stem. She picked it up and took it home and preserved it in formalin like the zoological specimens she had been used to working with during her university days. The specimen was kindly donated to the Museum in 2013.

The fourth and final collection resulted from the hard work and intuition of Mark Jannink combined with another hungry slug. Mark wondered if Ghost Orchids flowered more frequently after cold winters. He researched all previous Ghost Orchid discoveries - their preferred habitat, time of flowering and weather patterns - then staked out ten possible sites in the West Midlands, visiting them every two weeks throughout the summer of 2009, following the first cold winter for many years. Finally in September, he discovered one small specimen - causing great excitement amongst botanists, as the Ghost Orchid had been declared officially extinct in 2005! Mark returned several times over the next few days as the plant gradually faded and 'browned', until the stem was once again eaten through by slugs. The remains were collected and pressed, and donated to our herbarium shortly after.

So five of the seven British Ghost Orchids in Amgueddfa Cymru have been collected as a consequence of slugs, which are more of a threat than botanists. The Ghost Orchids are fully protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 but nobody seems to have told that to the slugs!

Swiss Ghost Orchids collected by W. A. Sledge in 1955
We also have eight specimens from Europe, where Ghost Orchids are more widespread, though still rare. One of our best specimens was collected by W. A. Sledge in Switzerland.

You are welcome to visit the Welsh National Herbarium to see the Ghost Orchids, but don't expect us to reveal where they were found! And please leave your slugs at home.

Tim Rich

Tim Rich works at the Welsh National Herbarium, National Museum Cardiff.

References


For further information on Ghost Orchids see:


RAILWAY POSTERS

Railway posters are colourful works of art that epitomise the era in which they were produced. Amgueddfa Cymru’s collection comprises about 60 examples, and these provide a good representation of the types of posters produced and displayed all over Wales.

Railway posters were a familiar feature when travelling on the railway, being displayed in stations, ticket offices and on platforms hoardings. They were used to entice the public to board the railway and escape from their daily routine. Generally they presented idealised images of popular holiday resorts, such as Tenby and Aberystwyth; historic towns, such as Caernarfon; and the countryside and coastline of north Wales, Pembrokeshire and Gower. These had all been made accessible by the lines on which the railway companies operated. It is often claimed that the railway invented the ‘package holiday’.

During the early years of the railways most advertising was in the form of simple printed leaflets and handbills. However these gradually became more elaborate, and with improvements in colour lithography in the later part of the 19th century there was a revolution in poster printing, as the colour poster became cheaper to produce.

Although railway posters have been in popular use since the late nineteenth century, it is generally regarded that their heyday was between 1923 (when four large companies, the Great Western Railway, Southern Railway, London, Midland & Scottish, and London & North Eastern Railway were formed) and 1947, when the railways were nationalised. However, Amgueddfa Cymru has many examples of British Railway posters produced in the 1950s and 60s which are equally eye catching and interesting, and often much more bright and cheerful.

The Jolly Fisherman

Some posters combined both images and slogans. One of the most famous is John Hassall’s image of a ‘jolly fisherman’ skipping along the beach, and the slogan “Skegness is SO Bracing”. The ‘jolly fisherman’ became the mascot of Skegness and is believed to have contributed to the success of this resort as a holiday destination. A G.W.R. poster by John Hassall in our collection, dating from c.1925, advertises Milford Haven, and depicts a fisherman and a boy holding fish with the slogan “Milford Haven – where fish comes from.”

The Museum’s collection comprises about 60 examples and these provide a good representation of the types of posters produced and displayed all over Wales. Examples range in date from about 1914 into the 1960s, with the 1950s and 60s very well represented. Each railway company developed their own distinct style, and they all used some of the finest poster artists of the day. Our collection includes excellent examples by Norman Wilkinson, Charles Pears & John Hassall.

Mark Etheridge

Mark Etheridge is a Curatorial Assistant (Industry) at Amgueddfa Cymru

Further Reading


After a life marred and shortened by tuberculosis James Dickson Innes was remembered by his contemporaries not only for his art, but also for his charm and good manners, his Welsh accent, and for occasional episodes of drunken exuberance. Frank Slade remembered making and sailing toy boats with him on an unnamed lake in Snowdonia, and rowing together up the river Rother in Kent to the pub at Starlock. Augustus John who worked with him in North Wales, was astonished by his capacity for work and his willingness to walk long distances to find the landscape and point of view he wanted. John perceived how Innes sublimated his feeling for the beautiful Euphemia Lamb into the many pictures of Arenig, his favourite mountain.

Innes was a Romantic at heart, acquired a caravan in North Wales, but was unable to persuade a woman to share it with him. He was overwhelmed by the beautiful Algerian girl who made a fuss of him at the Franco-British Exhibition. He read Captain Marryat’s Arabian stories, of princesses and villains. In a series of letters to John Fothergill from St. Ives, Innes shows himself to be a perceptive observer of the London art world, amused by its rivalries, while he was interested only in getting well and getting back to work. The letters reveal that while he had a fine command of metaphor, the spelling was idiosyncratic. He never mastered figure drawing, so that when he paints himself into a landscape, he cuts a forlorn figure: he is an onlooker, in a long coat and a wide brimmed hat, as my father remembered seeing him in Llanelli.

Born in 1887, the youngest of three brothers, his father was the accountant at the Copperworks. Innes followed his brothers in due course to Christ College, Brecon before spending a year at the Art School in Carmarthen. The following year, he was enrolled at the Slade, the power house of contemporary art in London, where Wilson Steer was one of his teachers, and his fellow students contributed a lively, noisy background of complaint and criticism. Many of the teaching staff at that time showed their work at the New English Art Club (NEAC). Innes’ early work was in the great tradition of English watercolourists in subject matter and in style, a tradition continued and enhanced by Wilson Steer, with castles and rivers in misty landscapes. An early view of Llanelli is in this tradition, the reality of the smoke filled atmosphere of
industrial stacks softened into a peaceful landscape and the distant sea.

At the end of his first year at the Slade, he was awarded a prize for a figure composition, rather surprisingly given his weakness in the genre. But the prize was £35 for each of three years, not only financially useful, but a sign to his parents that he was on the right track. In his second year, he had a picture of Battersea Reach accepted for the NEAC summer exhibition. His contribution was noted in the Llanelli local press.

Innes met Augustus John in the Autumn of 1907 when the third year began and while he was still living in Cheyne Walk. By December, Innes had moved to Fitzroy Street the hub of artistic activity, not only Augustus John's lodging, but also Walter Sickert's, the painter of the smoky interiors of theatres, and the doyen of what became well-known as the Camden Town Group. John Fothergill an early friend and an occasional teacher at the Slade, disapproved of Innes's move to Fitzroy Street, although for Innes, it was the centre of social and artistic activity, where he met Horace de Vere Cole and Lord Howard de Walden who became lifelong friends.

Fothergill and Innes travelled to France in Spring 1908, a journey which influenced Innes' art for the rest of his life. They went to Bozouls on the high plateau of the Causses, where they were bitterly cold and desperately uncomfortable. When they could stand it no longer, they went down to the coast, and fetched up at Collioure, where it was warm, and where Innes painted views of the town and of the sea. By chance, Innes had found the place to which he would return every year, exploring the landscapes of the Southern Pyrenees.

Back in England, after breaking his journey to paint at Caudebec on the Seine, he was unwell enough to consult a doctor who specialised in respiratory illness. Reassured that he had no need for concern, he continued his usual activities, showing with the Friday Club and with the Allied Artists Association, before setting off on a painting expedition in the Severn and Wye valleys. Later in the summer, he was at Cowes, painting and watching Olympic events.

He was taken on as a part-time teacher of painting at the Slade from the start of the Autumn term, but with the breakdown of his health, his mother took him to convalesce in St.Ives. Far from London, the friends and life he loved, he could consider what he might do: he had to paint, to work out of doors, to internalize the light and colour he had experienced in France. After the long convalescence, he worked in Devon, composing landscapes to fit his search for 'the ideal', before going back to Paris to work, and to see what Matisse, Derain and their contemporaries were doing. He went south to Collioure, to begin his concentrated and focussed study of the foothills of the Pyrenees.

Away from London for nearly a year, he immediately showed with the NEAC, and most importantly, he was offered a one-man show for January 1911 at the Chenil Gallery. The need to produce new material sent Innes...
hot-foot to North Wales. He was already familiar with the region, his aunt Agnes lived in Penmaenmawr, and he would have known Turner's monumental paintings. He returned to London with enough material to show twenty-six landscapes at the Chenil, including some of Dartmoor and of south west France.

In the less than four years of life which remained, Innes travelled between North Wales and South-west France, returning to London for two more one-man shows in 1912 and 1913. Increasingly, his art fused the elements of a rich palette with his perception of an idealized landscape, finding frequent and final expression in his many studies of Arenig.

Margaret Simons

Editors' Note

James Dickson Innes (1887-1914) by John Hoole and Margaret Simons is published by Lund Humphries at £45.
TY MAWR AND A BISHOP OF LLANDAFF

Judy Edwards

I do not normally spend much time reading obituaries but when last Spring I spotted one where the headline included ‘one of the outstanding gems of medieval Welsh domestic architecture’, I thought I would take a closer look. Peter Smith had been an architectural historian and the author of *Houses of the Welsh Countryside* published in 1975. His inspiration for this book came during a piece of work undertaken while he was a member of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales. And it was while he was carrying out this emergency recording of threatened buildings in Wales in 1971 that he came across what appeared to be a tumbledown barn, rotting away in a remote valley in mid-Wales.

Closer inspection made him realise that this was no barn but an aisled hall built during the 15th century from timber felled in 1460 which was, moreover, the birthplace of William Morgan who translated the Bible into Welsh. Had Peter Smith not brought this building, known as Ty Mawr, to public attention, it could very easily have gone the way of Plas Cadwgan, a late 14th century aisled hall that had later become the home of Edward Jones, master of the wardrobe to Elizabeth I. It had been dismissed as ‘strange looking’ and demolished in 1967. The original farm buildings of Ty Mawr had become ruinous during the 18th century but were eventually bought firstly by Lord Mostyn and then by Lord Penryn who undertook some restoration work in the mid 19th century, erecting a memorial to William Morgan above the front door

Once ‘discovered’ it became clear that Ty Mawr is a rare example of the late medieval houses typical of the Welsh Marches. It stands on the banks of the Afon Wybrnant in an open glade surrounded by wooded hillsides. Built on a platform created by cutting into the slope of the hillside, excavation revealed drainage gullies from an earlier building about half the size of Ty Mawr which measures 17.5m long by 8m wide. The extraordinary timber trusses have survived for more than 500 years and formed the centrepiece of restoration work. There was an open hearth in the centre of the building, marked by brick paving in the floor. It was built in 1631 with its wattle and daub hood miraculously surviving some 350 years. On a visit, look for the original timbers, visibly blackened by the smoke that must have percolated through a thatched roof for many a year.

Further archaeological examination revealed that in about 1594 a floor had been inserted in the upper chamber of the hall creating two new rooms, representing the period’s increasing value placed on privacy. It would have been here that the family would have gathered, rather than dining with their retinue and guests in the medieval open hall.

It was some forty years before this time that Ty Mawr became the birthplace of Bishop William Morgan the translator of the complete Bible into Welsh. He was probably one of five children, the second son of John ap Morgan and his wife Lowrie, tenant farmers of the Gwydir Estate owned by the Wynn family. John was a fairly wealthy tenant and a descendant of the same kind of family as the Wynn’s, the medieval aristocracy of Gwynedd. He was descended from at least two of the medieval Patriarchs, *The Fifteen Tribes*, of Gwynedd, Hedd Malwynog and Nefydd Hardd. Family trees were carefully remembered in those days but could be an embarrassment as well as a matter of pride. For instance, when Sir John Wynn had at some point been quarrelling with the adult William Morgan, he taunted him by calling him a descendant of ‘a mere bondsman’ on the grounds that his forefather Nefydd Hardd, many centuries earlier, had been demoted for some obscure indiscretion, from the rank of nobleman to that of bondsman.

The Wynn family had a tradition of inviting the ablest children of leading tenants and friends to be educated by
tutors alongside the Wynn children at Gwydir Castle near Llanwrst. William Morgan must have benefited from this experience because he went on to St. John's College Cambridge where he studied a range of subjects including philosophy, mathematics and Greek. There is no doubt that compared with families such as the Wynns from Gwydir, the family from Wybernant was poor but they were able to afford many years of university education for one of their sons at a time when such a thing was very rare among most Welsh families. They were in fact lesser gentry living at a time when the gap was widening between those fortunate enough to be able to combine farms and create an estate like the Wynns, and the not so lucky majority descended from younger sons or tenants paying an annual rent to the greater estates.

It had certainly been William Morgan’s luck to be ‘boarded out’ with such a cultivated family as the Wynns. They were in close contact with the court of the king; they were ardent protestants and patronised the arts and the new learning. They spoke Welsh and patronised bardic lore while also recognising that English was the language for ‘getting on in the world’. So William learned from the Wynns about the potential and the quality of a Cambridge education. It was more than likely that his older brother had wanted to stay at home on the farm so he was in just the right position to go on to university and become a priest. He was also able to reduce the financial burden of his parents by finding work as a sizar, a kind of valet waiting on rich students or sons of noblemen. While this limited the time for his own studies and amusement, he was able to form friendships with a few people who later played an important part in his life. Richard Vaughan was one such friend who later became Bishop of Bangor, then of Chester and lastly of London. Another was Edmwnd Prys the poet and scholar, who later became Archdeacon of Merioneth. These were part of a group of intelligent friends who were firm protestants and supporters of humanist education. The fact that so many of them came to hold high office in the Church was a sign that Welshmen could reach the top during the Tudor period, a situation that had not been the case prior to the Reformation.

At the age of twenty-three, William Morgan graduated BA in 1568 and was ordained a clergyman of the Church of England in the same year by the Bishop of Ely. Three years later he graduated MA and the following year received his first parish at Llanbadam Fawr in north Cardiganshire only a mile or so in land from the little port of Aberystwyth. It must have been during his time there that he came to the notice of Richard Davies, Bishop of St. Davids, who perhaps perceived that here was a man who could be trusted with the task of translating the Bible, a job abandoned by both himself and William Salisbury. Only two years later William was moved to Welshpool and then, in 1578, to the vicarage of Llan ym Mochnant in Denbighshire where he stayed for nearly twenty years. It was during this period that he completed the task of translating the Bible. A copy of the Hebrew Bible belonging to William Morgan has survived to this day with the notes he
made in the margins about particular Hebrew words. He continued to maintain contact with Cambridge, returning for both his Bachelor degree in Divinity and five years later a Doctorate in Divinity.

Parish life was not however as peaceful as he might have expected. Like many border parishes it was rich and lively in its Welsh culture, set on the slopes of the Berwyn Mountains where the river Rheadr plunges down from the highest waterfall in Wales.

William had married Ellen Salisbury before going to Cambridge but she must have died because he married again to Catherine daughter of George ap Richard ap John. She was from an ordinary Oswestry family and had been widowed twice. Although the marriage was a happy one, the wedding became the source of much local conflict because of the disappointment of a land owning family who had seen the vicar as an ideal husband for a daughter. Their farm Lloran Uwch still exists today in the parish of Llansilin. Opposition to William Morgan festered and grew with his wife being accused of being nothing more than 'a wafer woman', that is one going round the taverns with a basket on her arm selling wafers to tipplers. The whole business surrounding a number of accusations serves as a reminder that life during the period of translating was more than a mite troublesome.

However, in 1587 William was able to travel to and stay in London for a year to deal with the problems facing monoglot English printers who needed daily supervision. Once published William Morgan became famous and it was around this time that two Welsh bishoprics emerged, one at Bangor and the other at Llandaff. It was to the latter that William and family moved with Sir John Wynn lending horses for the long journey south. Unfortunately the medieval fabric of the church was beginning to decay and William's aim for repair and refurbishment came to nothing as the bishopric was notoriously poor and the decay continued until it became an 18th century ruin. William Morgan was moved to the bishopric of St. Asaph in 1601 at the age of 56 years and he died there three years later.

The translation of the Bible into Welsh marked a very important moment in the history of the Welsh language as well as in the history of Christianity. Not only had William Morgan provided the people of Wales with easy access to biblical teaching but he had also created a standard version of written Welsh for the first time. On a visit to Ty Mawr, you will find that these two major achievements continue to be celebrated at the place of his birth. Ty Mawr of Wybrnant has now been restored to its probable appearance in the 17th century and is tucked away in a valley on the edge of Snowdonia National Park in the parish of Penmachno. Today it is in the hands of The National Trust and while the slate roof and the windows look fairly modern, the walls and the central crucks are ancient reminders of a very different world.

COVER STORIES

This year marks the centenary of the start of the First World War. So it seemed appropriate to mark that fact by choosing as our front cover an image that has come to symbolise the human suffering and carnage caused by the War and its aftermath. It is fitting, too, because the poppy is a central motif of the Museum's commemoration of the war over the next four years.

The artist was Margaret J. Towers (née Sutton) (1871-56) who had private tuition in painting and drawing and then married Alfred Towers who was a professional artist. They set up home in Llanbedr in Gwynedd where she became a keen gardener, planning a garden of trees and shrubs for her new home. Once the garden was established she moved on to collecting and drawing the local flora and between 1920 and 1939 she painted over 300 wild flowers. Each painting normally contained several plant images and, therefore, the image we have chosen is a cropped section of a larger sheet which also contained an image of the yellow horned-poppy or Welsh poppy (Glaucium flavum). You can see the original image and more of her work in Catalogue of Botanical Prints and Drawings at the National Museums and Galleries of Wales by M.H. Lazurus and H.S. Pardoe (2003).

The choice of the back cover marks another centenary. This one being the death of the Welsh artist James Dickson Innes at the tragically young age of twenty-seven from tuberculosis. The painting shows a young woman standing on the shores of Llyn Tryweryn with, in the background one of Innes' favourite motifs, the imposing outline of...
There were a number of very successful exhibitions last year. Particular mention must be made of an exhibition set to coincide with the centenary of Dylan Thomas’s birth. This was *Llareggub: Peter Blake illustrates Under Milk Wood by Dylan Thomas*. Peter Blake emerged as a key figure of the Pop Art movement of the late 1950s and his early paintings include imagery from advertisements, music hall, entertainment, and wrestlers, often including collaged elements. Throughout his career he has engaged with popular culture and probably achieved his greatest fame through designing the cover for The Beatles album *Sergeant Peppers Lonely Hearts’ Club* Band from 1967. Incidentally Dylan Thomas makes an appearance on the Sergeant Pepper album cover, in amongst the magical crowd, made up of icons and heroes and was included at John Lennon’s suggestion.

In addition he has been a long-time admirer of Dylan Thomas, and has always been fascinated by the radio play and remembers first hearing *Under Milk Wood* while at the Royal College. The exhibition is the culmination of a 28-year obsession of Peter Blake with Dylan Thomas’s most famous work. Peter Blake has created pencil portraits of all the seventy-four characters who inhabit the work, water colours of the dream sequences as well as collages, drawings and paintings of scenes and locations in the village of Llareggub where the action of the play is set. The exhibition produced plenty of media interest, including a programme on the artist and his love of *Under Milk Wood* which was broadcast on BBC 1 Wales. There may still be time to catch it depending on when you receive this Newsletter as the closing date of the exhibition is 16th March.

**MUSEUM NEWS**

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**BAfM NEWS**

Friends will be interested to know that this year the BAfM Annual Meeting and Conference will be held in Swansea. The meeting is from Friday 26th September to Sunday 28th September and it is being held in the Marriott Hotel. The programme provides the opportunities for members of any Friends organisation to socialise, participate in discussions and listen to informed and challenging speakers. If you would like to know more you should contact Lyndon Morris (lyndonchris@btinternet.com).

**News from the National Wool Museum**

The National Wool Museum’s Learning Officer together with students studying textiles at Ysgol Glan y Mor and children from local primary schools worked together to create a large wall hanging which reflected the local area. The project involved a visit to the Museum to learn about the Woollen Industry in Wales and included a felt making session. Ideas were developed back at school and in a one-day workshop and the completed wall hanging incorporated much of what they had learnt about textile materials. The completed wall hanging was presented to the Museum for display last summer and was followed by a touring exhibition around each of the schools involved.

The project was supported by *Transforming Children’s Futures*, the Museum’s strategy for creating opportunities for children to have cultural experiences with none of those participating having previously been involved with the National Wool Museum. It is very pleasing to add that
the project was made possible with the support of the US, the Friends, through making available grants that allowed transport costs to be subsidised.

**Chronicling changes at St Fagans**

Much of the focus of museum news remains on the History Development Project at St Fagans where a visiting experience has been described as where you can “walk in the footsteps of your fathers, sit and ponder by an open fire, eat freshly baked bread and revel in Wales’s history” (Cerys Matthews). But this re-development project aims for even more than this by refurbishing the main building to include new galleries and by creating an open air museum for the display of archaeological, cultural and social history.

The redevelopment of St Fagans involves significant changes in the historic woodland area. This is seeing the creation of an open-air archaeology zone and the re-imagining of two buildings from Anglesey, one of which is the medieval court and the other a Celtic village centred on a farmstead.

The first to be completed will be Bryn Eryr, a farmstead based on an archaeological site from the time of the Roman conquest. This rural settlement will consist of two roundhouses built with six-foot thick clay walls and large conical thatched roofs. The farmstead will be built with the help of hundreds of volunteers, school children and members of neighbouring communities in Ely and Caerau. Together with the Museum’s own building team, they will raise up the clay walls, help interpret the history of the houses and rediscover the lives of its original inhabitants.

The other is the reconstruction of the great hall from Llys Rhosyr in Anglesey, north Wales, which was built around 1200 AD, and its construction is providing one of the most exciting and challenging archaeological projects attempted in Wales. With nine-metre high stone walls and a thatched timber roof, the building of the court will provide apprenticeships and trainee placements to work with our Historic Buildings Unit. Then once it has been completed, it will be a place where children from schools and community groups from across Wales will, for the first time, be able to stay overnight at the Museum.

Those who have visited St. Fagans during the winter will not only have had the opportunity to see these new developments but also the chance to enjoy a very wide range of activities, perhaps for the first time. These ranged from seeing the burning of the Wicker Man at Halloween, getting involved in the the Quilt Club or getting valuable tips from the gardener about pruning and training their roses or building a ‘hot bed’.

In December, of course, there were the Tudor Style Christmas preparations and the Winter Solstice Feast on the shortest day, as well as the Film Club classic *A Childs Christmas in Wales*. In the New Year there were learning opportunities to join a chocolate workshop on St Dwynwen’s Day; or learning to crochet for the first time. Or you might have chosen to take a journey through 180 years of public health and see how health problems change over time.

**Volunteering**

Then again if you have been thinking about volunteering, there are all kinds of ways to get involved: either in public programmes to do with helping out with visitors to galleries or carrying out visitor surveys; working ‘behind the scenes’ where the collections are managed or getting stuck in around the St Fagans gardens. Ffion Davies is the new
Unknown Wales Conference: A Big Success

In October 2013 the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales (WTSWW) and the National Museum Wales (NMW) held their third and most successful Unknown Wales Conference to date.

Over 200 people attended to hear talks on topics as varied as Red Squirrels in Mid-Wales and to the importance of soil fungi and how to identify seaweeds. The highlight for many was Professor Tim Guilford’s presentation on the history of bird research, which highlighted the unique relationship between birds and humans.

The Conference, which is a partnership between WTSWW and the Museum, is designed to be a celebration of Welsh wildlife, informing people of the wonderful and often forgotten wildlife in Wales and the new and extraordinary ways we are finding out more about them. The conference aims to stay away from political agendas, targets and policies and instead focus directly on the wildlife.

Work has already begun on organising the fourth Unknown Wales Conference in 2014, which is likely to take place in the Museum in October. Feedback from the conference was overwhelmingly positive and many suggestions for potential speakers for next year’s conference have already been made.

Retirement of John Kenyon

November 2013 saw the retirement of Dr John R. Kenyon, Librarian at Amgueddfa Cymru / National Museum Wales following thirty-four years of unbroken service. During this time he developed and promoted the Library’s special collections especially, early Welsh topographical books and contemporary private press volumes.

Whilst working as Assistant Librarian at the Society of Antiquaries back in the early 1970s, John studied to become an Associate of the Library Association. He then went on to gain a Joint Honours degree in History and Archaeology from the University of Southampton in 1977 and was Assistant Librarian at the University of Oxford during the period 1977-79 before joining the National Museum Wales in 1979.

He is one of the UK’s leading authorities on castles, and has written and edited a number of books and academic papers on this theme, most notably *The Medieval Castles of Wales* (University of Wales Press, 2010). In recognition of his literary contributions to the field of castle studies, he was awarded a PhD by the School of History and Archaeology, Cardiff University in 2011.
John is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London, Royal Historical Society, Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and an Honorary Lecturer at the School of History and Archaeology, Cardiff University.

John has dedicated thirty-four years to work and study in Wales, although he originally comes from the Welsh Marches, namely the Pradoe estate near Oswestry in Shropshire. His encyclopaedic knowledge, near-photographic memory and dedication to the post of Head Librarian will be missed by the curators and staff at Amgueddfa Cymru / National Museum Wales.

I am sure that Friends will join in wishing him a long and happy retirement sharing his time between duties as Head Server at Llandaff Cathedral and walking his yellow Labrador, Merryn with his wife Chris.

Judy Edwards

\[\text{TUSCAN TREASURES: OCTOBER 2013}\]

Tuscany: it is a word that brings a smile, evoking dreams and memories of blue skies, golden sunsets and idyllic landscapes of classical beauty. All of these pleasures together with its wonderful art treasures the Friends of the Museum were fortunate to experience during their stay there. The itinerary for our Tuscan week was varied and interesting. Despite the profusion of modern buildings, the towns and cities of Tuscany are wonderful survivals from earlier times.

Florence, which we visited on the first full day of the tour, is without doubt the star attraction and few cities anywhere can rival its museums, galleries and churches filled with masterpieces of art. It was unfortunate that the weather on this first day was quite appalling. Heavy rain poured from leaden skies and black clouds hid the glories of this great city. We began with an instructive guided tour of the magnificent Uffizi Gallery and some members of the party opted to remain here for the rest of the day enjoying its splendours and sheltering from the downpour outside. Others splashed through the gloomy streets to visit some of Florence’s many attractions but it was a very wet and weary group who were relieved to board the coach for the journey back to the hotel.

The other towns and cities on our programme are perhaps not as well-known as Florence but each place had its own special delights and treasures. Lucca is a lovely small walled town and in the Cathedral of St Martin is the exquisite tomb of Ilaria del Carreto, the young wife of a local merchant. Ilaria died early in the 15th century following the birth of her second child and her serene beauty has been immortalised here by Jacopo della Quercia. Dressed in beautiful robes, she lies as if asleep - a poignant and lovely effigy.

Puccini, composer of so many fine operas was born in Lucca but after he achieved success he made his home in Torre de Lago, a quiet resort situated on the edge of a tranquil lake. The house in which the composer lived

Roy Saer, a long-standing member of the Friends, has written a new book, ‘Canu at Iws ac Ysgrifau Eraill (‘Song for Use’ and other Articles) is a retrospective collection of research articles in English as well as Welsh covering traditional songs, dances and customs. The volume is available through bookshops at £10.95, or via the www.gwales.com website.

Diane Davies

**FRIENDS NEWS & ACTIVITIES**

**FRIENDS NEWS**

Membership update

Thank you to the many Friends who have renewed their membership for 2014/2015. We currently have a membership of almost 900 and we greatly appreciate your efforts in introducing new members to our association. This is so important as it enables us to maintain a vibrant membership and to increase the support the Friends offer to the Museum.

As mentioned by the Chairman, a number of Friends did not amend their standing order instructions to their bank prior to March 2013. As a result the amounts credited to the Friends account remained at the previous subscription rate. A final letter was sent to those concerned in November. When no response was received by the end of the year, it was assumed that they did not wish to continue with their membership. Should anyone know of Friends who may have been affected by this situation, but would like their membership reinstated, they may contact Kathryn Outhwaite [at kathrynoouthwaite@gmail.com or Tel: 029 20224636].

Llyfr Newydd Sbon gan Roy Saer


Diane Davies

**Roy Saer, a long-standing member of the Friends, has written a new book. ‘Canu at Iws ac Ysgrifau Eraill (‘Song for Use’ and other Articles) is a retrospective collection of research articles in English as well as Welsh covering traditional songs, dances and customs. The volume is available through bookshops at £10.95, or via the www.gwales.com website.**
Palazzo Pfanner in Lucca

holds an interesting and varied collection of artefacts, memorabilia and costumes. With extracts from his operas playing softly in the background, it proved to be a fascinating place to spend a morning.

The hill top town of Vinci, birthplace of Leonardo, is another pleasant place we visited. The house of the artist’s birth is situated just outside the town amid groves of olive trees. From here there are fine views of the lovely pastoral landscape. In the town itself there is an excellent museum containing many ingenious scale models of the machines invented by Leonardo da Vinci.

Siena is perhaps the jewel of Tuscany. The perfect beauty of its central piazza, the Campo surmounted by the great tower of the Palazzo Publico, is breathtaking in its grandeur while the elegantly striped tower of the Cathedral rises above the many other lovely buildings. Few places anywhere can equal the charm of the narrow streets and quiet corners, flights of steps and shadowy arches while within the buildings the richness of the art of the Sienese masters never fails to enchant the viewer. The solemnly beautiful Madonnas of Duccio and Simone Martini contrast with the wonderfully detailed frescoes of Good and Bad Government by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in the town hall. These frescoes are a rare survival of early secular art in which the life of 14th Century Siena is pictured in fascinating and intriguing detail.

In addition to these city visits there were also villas and gardens of Tuscany to be enjoyed. Some of these were sadly neglected with an air of forlorn grandeur, while others were more elegant and stately. Italy has no equivalent of our National Trust and, as our excellent guide on one tour explained, it is therefore a constant struggle for the owners to raise funds needed for the upkeep of these large houses and their colourful gardens.

However holidays are not just about instruction and culture. It is perhaps the quirky and unexpected incidents that linger in one’s memory. The Friends on this particular trip will not quickly forget a procession from a local church parading through the village. It looked as if all local inhabitants, dressed in their Sunday best were marching to the strains of their youthful band. Rather surprisingly, the band was playing Land of Hope and Glory - although here it no doubt had another title. Banners were waved and statues carried reverently by the clergy and the stately parade walked slowly ahead of our coach. As the procession turned down a side road many of its participants turned to wave farewell to the rather bemused Friends.

There were of course many long lunches to linger over and chat with old and new friends. It was while enjoying what
is surely one of the best pastimes in any holiday, sitting with an excellent coffee in a lovely and vibrant piazza, that I came across the perfect words to define this magical place. Printed on the café’s menu were verses by the Irish poet W B Yeats:

Wine comes in at the mouth
And love comes in at the eye
That’s all we shall know for truth
Before we grow old and die
I lift the glass to my mouth
I look at you and I sigh.

Il vino raggugge la bocca
Et l’amore raggugge gli occhi
Questa e la sola verita che ci e dato co
Prima di invecchiare e morire
Sollevo il bicchiere alla labbra,
Ti guardo e sospiro

These words I think sum up the magic of Tuscany. As ever, our sincere thanks to Val for giving us the chance to be a part of it.

Diana Wilson

FRIENDS VISIT TO THE NATIONAL COLLECTIONS CENTRE, NANTGARW

Last November nearly forty Friends took up the opportunity to visit a less well-know branch of Amgueddfa Cymru - the Collections Centre situated on an industrial estate near Nantgarw. The Centre houses many of the Museum’s industrial artifacts. It also stores artifacts for other branches of the Museum; at the moment it is storing many items from St Fagans because of the redevelopment that is taking place there.

The tour started with a general talk from Carolyn Charles, Curator and Collections Manager at the Centre, who outlined the history of the centre, the breadth of material held and the conservation and other work done by the Centre. The Centre was created in 1998 due to the planned closure of the Welsh Industrial and Maritime Museum which had been situated in a number of non-purpose built buildings in Cardiff Bay. Although much of its collection formed the basis of the new National Waterfront Museum in Swansea when it opened in 2005, the remainder came to the Collections Centre. So the Centre holds a significant number of the industrial artefacts held by Amgueddfa Cymru, including everything from photographs and works of art relating to industry to large pieces of industrial equipment and items of transport. In addition it also houses the Archive Resource Centre. She also explained about the changes that had to be made to the storage facilities in order to accommodate the numerous items having to be brought to the Centre from St Fagans.

We then had guided tours showing three aspects in more detail.

Mark Etheridge, Curatorial Assistant, Collections Management, Department of Industry showed us the transport collection including everything from a penny farthing to an air sea rescue helicopter, as well as other large industrial artefacts stored at the Centre. One of those is a large fan of an air pump that was used to draw air through mine shafts and which it is planned to restore in working order at Big Pit. The highlight here for me, though, was to see three examples of Gilbern cars, the only car to be designed and made in Wales. Gilbern cars were made in Llantwit Fardre, near Pontypridd between 1959 and 1973. The company was founded by Giles Smith and Bernard Friese and the name, Gilbern, was a combination of the first three letters from Giles and the first four from Bernard. The cars were available at first only as kits but later complete cars were also available.

Jon James, Senior Conservator, Industry (Conservation Projects) explained about the conservation of small objects (if you can lift it, it is a small object) and the development of new skills that conservation of industrial objects demands from conservators coming from a museum-based tradition.

Lisa Childs, Archive Conservator for Amgueddfa Cymru, and Elspeth Jordan, Archive Conservator for the Esmee Fairburn Historic Photographs Project, talked about the project that is allowing the Museum to conserve and digitise its collection of industrial photographs in order to make them available for research and display. One of the most fascinating of the photographs they showed us was of a pilot and others standing beside a WWI biplane. From researching the picture they had discovered that the pilot had gone AWOL with the plane and flown it back to his home in Abercraf in the Swansea Valley landing it in a field near the village. The story emphasised that what was important was not necessarily the photograph but rather the history that surrounds it.

So very warm thanks to all at the Collections Centre who made it a memorable visit and to Roger Gagg who organised it on behalf of the Friends. I can add that he is thinking of repeating the visit in the future and so I would urge those who missed out this time not do so again, if the opportunity arises.

Diane Davies