A MESSAGE TO FRIENDS

It is gratifying that this edition includes a number of articles from new contributors. It is good to have fresh insights and new writers help ensure that there is something for everyone.

There are just two major articles this time. The first is on the Welsh sculptor William Goscombe John and it concentrates on the works you can see in the Museum. The second is on the Museum Library’s collection of rare 16th and 17th century books about natural history, which were part of a generous bequest in the 1950s.

The shorter pieces cover a wide range of topics. They range from one on a bridge that was never built but which would have crossed the River Usk at Newport in a single span; an artist’s impression that illustrates the article shows that it would have been quite a sight. Then there is the extraordinary and gruesome story behind a memorial found by chance in Egwylfolian Church which bears the sombre inscription: “Gwell Angaw na Gwarth” (Death before Dishonour). Or you can read about an 18th century clockmaker from Llanearfan and the author’s favourite clock which was made by him. Plus there is a tribute to a Welsh folk historian who was the Curator at St Fagans in the 1970s and 1980s, Trefor Meredith Owen.

This year the National Eisteddfod is at Abergavenny and the Museum will once again have a presence on the Maes. However, this year it will be part of a group effort to explore the history of the local area under the umbrella title, Lle Hanes. So it is gratifying to have an article that sets out to explain why this is happening and what you can expect when you visit the Eisteddfod in August.

The Rhagor page on the Museum’s website is no more but articles on all aspects of the collection and the research carried out by Museum staff can found in the Explore section of the new website. I am pleased to be able to include three of these. The first introduces the Museum’s collection of Chinese jade sculptures (one of which features on the front cover). The second looks at the work of William Smith who created the first geological map of Great Britain, which was the subject of a recent exhibition at National Museum Cardiff. A version of one of these maps held by the Museum can be seen on the back cover. The third article looks at Welsh participation in the growth of Britain’s maritime empire in the 18th century by focusing on two portraits of Welsh sea captains owned by the Museum. Thanks must go to Rhodri Viney for his help in sourcing these articles and obtaining permission to use them.

On the theme of thanks, I must also mention Kay Kays who helped source and gave permission for images that are used in the Goscombe John article and in Museum News.

Happy reading

Diane Davies

CORRIGENDA

A number of factual inaccuracies crept into the last edition and I want to take this opportunity to correct them.

(1) Diana Elizabeth Davies, who as reported in Friends News left a very generous bequest to the Friends, was the first manager of Cardiff City Council’s Housing Advice Centre and not the Citizens Advice Bureau as stated.

(2) In By Gift of Chance, about the gift of a letter to Ceredigion County Archive, it should have stated that the donor, Davied Montag, died at the age of 92 (not 82) and the letter was gifted by his widow (not his daughter).

Diane Davies
FROM THE CHAIRMAN

On a wet August afternoon last year I happened to visit the Museum in Cathays Park, Cardiff and was amazed to see how busy it was. There were many children accompanied by their parents or grandparents with, perhaps as you might expect, the dinosaurs display being very popular! I then decided to stroll around some of the other galleries, and again was struck by how full of people many of the galleries were. I particularly remember overhearing two young teenagers debating quite heatedly what paintings they liked and did not like in the Impressionists’ Gallery.

After leaving the Museum, I began to think about the richness and contrasting experiences that the Museum offers, across all its sites, to people of all ages, national, ethnic and social backgrounds. It also caused me to reflect on the vision and foresight of the founding men and women who strove so hard to establish new Welsh national institutions, such as the National Museum and National Library at the beginning of the twentieth century.

As I reflected on those years I thought about the many obstacles people had to overcome to see the realization of the dream to establish a National Museum of Wales. From the outset, this vision, perhaps most aptly summarized in the words of the Museum’s original vision statement, “To teach the world about Wales, and Wales about itself” was not an insular vision, but rather one in which the Museum strove to place and interpret the experiences of people who have lived and worked in Wales and beyond in the broader British, European and world contexts.

The Museum still holds to this early vision, but as times have changed throughout its history it has had to adapt, reinterpret and develop its vision to meet new challenges. The year 2015 saw the publication of Inspiring people: Changing lives, the Museum’s most recent vision statement where it looks forward to the next ten years and I would commend it strongly to you. [A pdf version of the vision statement is available at www.museumwales.ac.uk.]

What can we do, as Friends, to help and support the Museum to realize this vision for the future over the coming years? Of course, there is financial support. The Museum has always relied on contributions from trusts and major benefactors donating land, buildings, artifacts, gifts and bequests, and these will probably become increasingly important in the future as the Museum struggles to manage with reductions in its public funding.

But it is not only about the large contributions of the few. There are many more unnamed men and women who support the Museum financially, albeit in more modest ways. By joining the Friends you too, together with your presence at events, activities and exhibitions also show your support and commitment to the Museum.

Thank you for your continuing support.

Richard Carter
WELSH ARTIST WILLIAM GOSCOMBE JOHN (1860-1952)  

Christabel Hutchings

As a young child I was frequently taken by my father to National Museum Cardiff to see my great-grandmother. There she could be seen hanging on the wall, a strange brown colour and rather smaller than one expected a great-grandmother to be. It was only later in childhood that I understood that this was a bronze representation of Margaret Simpson (1838-1923) created by the artist Sir William Goscombe John “to commemorate a noble life devoted to education in Cardiff”. In this way I developed an interest in Goscombe John which has remained with me all my life. Many of his works of art are on display in Amgueddfa Cymru or, like my great-grandmother’s relief, in storage. Whilst visiting the store room recently, I became aware of the effectiveness of the medium of bronze. As I moved in front of Margaret Simpson’s relief the light caught the folds in her clothes forming light and shade and creating an impression of animated energy.

Oliver Fairclough, the former Keeper of Art at Amgueddfa Cymru, provides information about Goscombe John on the Museum’s website. He became a leader of the British ‘New Sculpture’ movement which aimed to make sculpture more dynamic through the naturalistic representation of the human body. Aged fourteen, he joined his father, who was a woodcarver, working on the restoration of Cardiff Castle. At the same time he studied drawing at Cardiff School of Art. In 1881 he went to London as a pupil assistant to Thomas Nicholls, the sculptor responsible for the Castle’s Animal Wall and he continued his studies at the Kennington School of Art. From 1884 he studied at the Royal Academy Schools where he was taught naturalistic modelling in clay by the French artist Jules Dalou (1838-1902) and four of his works from this period can be seen at the Museum. In 1888 a fund was raised by Cardiff Free Library Committee for Goscombe John to travel and study abroad and in 1889 he won the Royal Academy Gold Medal Travel Scholarship. By 1891 he was in Paris where he watched Auguste Rodin at work. In 1892 the Paris Salon honoured him with an ‘honourable mention’ for his statue entitled Morpheus and he gained a second medal in 1901 for a bronze statue of the late Duke of Devonshire K.G. He pointed out to Cardiff Librarian, John Ballinger, who was to become the first Librarian of the National Library of Wales, that it was, “the highest award that is given to foreigners” and further stated “I am the first English [sic] sculptor who has ever had a medal at the Salon”. He became an associate member of the Royal Academy in 1899 and was elected Royal Academician in 1909. He had married Martha Weiss in 1891 and they had one daughter, Muriel, who married the son of artist Sir Luke Fildes.

Goscombe John was a talented and prolific artist and the Art Collections Online reveals that he was involved in the Welsh cultural revival of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century which saw artists increasingly using Celtic symbols and making references to Welsh mythology and Welsh heroes. Goscombe John was in demand as Wales sought create memorials of civic and national pride. Merlin and Arthur was exhibited in 1902 and was gifted by John to Amgueddfa Cymru in 1932, while the 1899 National Eisteddfod medal depicts the Welsh medieval hero Prince Llewelyn ap Gruffydd. Goscombe John’s Welsh roots and ties to Amgueddfa...
Cymru meant he was the obvious choice for the creation of the silver electrotype seal of the Museum. As Oliver Fairclough states, “Goscombe John was one of the founding fathers of Amgueddfa Cymru. He served on the governing Council for over forty years, and played a major role in establishing the future direction of the art collection.” The seal was created in 1907 and he gifted a copy to the museum in 1912. In the edition of 26th December 1908, Cardiff’s Evening Express newspaper explained the seal’s symbolism to its readers. It portrayed “a lovely figure, large browed, and laurel crowned, representing Learning, set in Greek surroundings suggesting Archaeology and Antiquity”. The figure held a shield showing the Red Dragon Badge of the Prince of Wales which was increasingly being used as a symbol of Welsh patriotism and had been granted by Edward VII to the Prince of Wales in December 1901.

Goscombe John was careful to keep in touch with his Welsh roots and Wales provided a rich source of commissions although he also had wider appeal as his creations for the George V Jubilee Medal and the Investiture Medal of Prince Edward reveal. As Oliver Fairclough comments, “The Welsh and the Imperial came together in the commission for the regalia for the investiture for the future Edward VIII as Prince of Wales at Caernarfon Castle in 1911. John designed a crown, a sceptre and a sword that contained a ‘Welsh’ iconography of dragons, daffodils and Celtic interlace.” Goscombe John was knighted in 1911 for his role in the Investiture and he gifted the silver electrotype medal to the Museum in 1913.

Goscombe John created many medals for the Royal National Eisteddfod Association and also designed the Hirlas Horn which is still part of the regalia used in Gorsedd ceremonies today. He was paid £359 for labour and materials and it was presented by Lord Tredegar, the donor, at the Cardiff Eisteddfod of 1899. On 24th July 1899, Goscombe John wrote to his artist friend T.H. Thomas, who was the first Herald Bard of the Gorsedd, “the ‘gorsedd’ was a most brilliant & unique ceremony” and added “what a delightful dazzle & colour & sparkle there was about the whole affair”. However, he was concerned about the way his Hirlas Horn was handled during the ceremony and wrote again to Thomas on 9th November, “It would be a great pity for the cover to fall & smash. I was the means of saving it in the procession at Cardiff so I am anxious …”.

Many of his important creations are in Amgueddfa Cymru. Morpheus was created in 1890 in plaster and was first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1891 but, by 1894, a bronze example was in the Museum. Morpheus, the Greek god of dreams, owed much to Auguste Rodin. Also in 1894 he exhibited a full size plaster model of St John the Baptist at the Royal Academy. A bronze replica is displayed alongside Rodin’s St John the Baptist Preaching in National Museum Cardiff. Placing them together invites comparison and Goscombe John’s statue is clearly influenced by Rodin. Both show St John in movement with a raised arm but there is lightness and elegance and almost a dance-like quality in the Goscombe John’s portrayal. While Rodin was trying to create an opposite effect and
used an Italian peasant as a model in order to create a statue of uncouth appearance and physical force. However, Goscombe John worked equally well in marble although the number of works in bronze suggest this was his preferred medium. The marble statue St David Blessing the People is displayed in Cardiff City Hall and was created in 1916. Another effective marble effigy is of a slumbering Dean Vaughan (1816-1897) in Llandaff Cathedral. The effigy of a recumbent John Viriamu Jones (1856-1901), Principal of University College Cardiff, was completed in 1906 and is in the University’s Main Building. The fact that he is seated and cross legged allows one to appreciate Goscombe John’s skill as he creates every fold and crease in the academic gown.

With the decline of the naturalistic art movement, which was replaced by sculpting straight onto stone, one might have expected Goscombe John to obtain fewer commissions, but warfare created demands for commemoration. On entering National Museum Cardiff one can see The Drummer Boy, created in bronze and gifted by Goscombe John in 1927. He suggested it should be displayed in the entrance hall of the Museum. The young soldier is a replica of a figure on the South African War Memorial to the King’s Regiment in Liverpool. Goscombe John described the boy at the Battle of Dettingen of 1743 as, “seated on a battered earthwork and shouting to his comrades, beats a stirring and joyful call to arms, forgetful of all sorrow”. The Newcastle-upon-Tyne war memorial, The Response 1914 depicts a group of thirty people responding to the call to arms. It shows soldiers marching to war watched by an angel while women and children bid them farewell. The crowd scene is masterly in its execution of detail and it is necessary to view sections to appreciate the various tableaux in the work of art. It was unveiled by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales in 1923.

The Boy Scout provides an interesting story. It was not created as a memorial but, sadly, was to become one. The figure was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1911 and is a portrait of Basil Webb, the only son of Henry Webb, of Llwynarthurhau, Monmouthshire, a Liberal MP and mining engineer, who was a director of David Davies’s Ocean Coal Company. The figure has been compared to Renais-
sance Florence artist Andrea del Verrocchio's David. Basil Webb served as a 2nd Lieutenant with the Welsh Guards during the First World War and was killed in December 1917. Goscombe John subsequently created an altar and reredos in Hereford Cathedral to his memory.

Goscombe John was well known for his ability to create memorial portraits of dignitaries as the large number of commissions reveal. A statue of David Lloyd George can be seen in Caernarfon with relief bronze panels to the sides portraying the village school at Llanystumdwy, where he was educated, and the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. A bronze portrait study of the statue is in Amgueddfa Cymru’s collection and was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1921.

He also created many examples of a work of art in different mediums. For example, The Elf was exhibited at the Royal Academy to much acclaim as a life sized plaster in 1898. A marble copy dated 1899 exists in Glasgow and a copy can be seen in the gardens of St Fagans National History Museum as well as a bronze at National Museum Cardiff. One hundred and eight examples of his work are listed on the Museum’s Art Collections Online although some are wax models created as preparatory to finished works in other mediums. About one third of all the listed examples of Goscombe John’s artistic work were personally gifted by him to Amgueddfa Cymru. His generosity was motivated by his affection for the city of his birth and he informed John Ballinger that “it is always the case of anything for Cardiff”. However, he also had a strong attachment to Wales and especially to Amgueddfa Cymru which, under the guidance of men like Goscombe John, was creating a Welsh national art collection.

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CHINESE JADES AT AMGUEDDFA CYMRU

Jade is a tough translucent material that can be made into ornaments, ceremonial weapons and ritual objects. For more than seven millennia jade has had a high cultural significance in China and throughout history craftsmen have used innovative design and technical skills to produce a great variety of objects from diverse categories in jade.

The Material

The Chinese term for jade "Yu" can be used to reference to any stone of beauty or value; such as agate or turquoise, which possess the five following values:

1. Smooth texture
2. Hardness
3. Dense structure
4. Translucency
5. Variant hues
However when we discuss the term "Jade" (particularly in a Western museum) we are specifically discussing either of two different minerals: nephrite and jadeite. The mineral jadeite arrived relatively late to China (around the end of the 18th century) therefore the majority of what is considered to be a Chinese jade is nephrite.

**Jades of Amgueddfa Cymru**

All animals carved during the Ming and Qing dynasty came with auspicious meanings and good wishes directed to the viewer. The majority of the collection at National Museum Cardiff are such objects.

The duck above looks as if it is swimming. The lotus on its back and in its back are to bring the owner good fortune. Combination of the simple forms and fine details makes it typical of the late Ming period.

Buffalo were used in houses to repress evil spirits. However due to its role pulling a plough it has also become a symbol of spring and agriculture. Those lying with their head tuned, as in the one shown below could indicate the world being at peace.

We are unsure whether the above bird is a swan or a goose, in ancient Chinese culture the swan was the heavenly version of a goose, though both are sacred animals.

The water dropper below was used to support the treasures of the studio such as the brush, ink, paper and ink stone. These pieces were used as early as the 13th century however were for more widely known during the Ming and Qing period.

The collection of Chinese jade in Europe was scarce before the 19th century. Really it seems to have started after the exhibition of jades at the Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace. The first pieces to enter the collection were for the Turner House collection presumably acquired by the gallery’s first patron, John Pike Thomas, in the 1800’s. Primarily though, they come from the David Bertram Levinson bequest in 1967. Little is known about the provenance of the jade but it’s likely they are all from the 1800s and 1900’s.

**Penelope Hines**

Penelope Hines is a Temporary Curator of Applied Art at Amgueddfa Cymru.
16TH CENTURY BOOKS IN THE WILLOUGHBY GARDNER LIBRARY

Kristine Chapman

In 1953 Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales received the donation of a significant collection of over 300 natural history books, early and modern, from Dr Willoughby Gardner of Deganwy, North Wales. Dr Gardner was born in Cheshire in 1860, but ill health forced him to take early retirement. He went to live in Deganwy in the early 1900s, where he was able to dedicate his time to pursuing his interests, which spanned archaeology, entomology and numismatics.

He was very active in a number of local archaeology and natural history societies, serving as president of many of them including, the Lancashire & Cheshire Entomological Society and the Cambrian Archaeological Association. He was also a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, the Royal Entomological Society, the Linnaean Society and the British and Royal Numismatic Societies. He was also involved with the Ancient Monuments Advisory Board for Wales and the Board of Celtic Studies at the University of Wales, from whom he received an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science in 1927.

Because of these interests, he had a close relationship with the Museum: for example, he did a great deal of work on surveying hill forts in Wales and a number of finds from those digs were donated to the Archaeology department. A few years before his death he donated his collection of British Aculeate Hymenoptera to the Zoology department.

However his donation of a substantial library of early natural history books, ranging from the 15th to the 18th centuries, was by far his most generous bequest and this bequest contains a number of rare treasures. It is not possible to cover the full range of the collection in one article, so I will instead focus on a few items from the 16th century.

Books from this period illustrate the widespread and confident use of printing after the invention of the movable type printing press in 1450 by Gutenberg revolutionised the industry. The innovation spread from Germany throughout the rest of Europe and, by 1500, the number of printers’ workshops had dramatically increased and they had refined their processes enough to produce books in ever greater quantities. This allowed for an increased exchange of information and ideas that resulted in significant advances in the fields of natural history during the 16th century.

While early subjects for printing tended toward reprints of works from classical antiquity, by the mid-16th century a much wider range of subjects was covered. Very popular at this time were herbals, guides to plants that primarily focused on their properties as medicinal aids. The plants were listed, along with full descriptions and details as to what illnesses they could cure. They were often written by leading physicians and were aimed at the layman rather than the scholar.

The descriptions would often include illustrations of the plants in the form of woodcuts. A woodcut is a form of relief printing that takes its name from the method of creation: a block of wood is carved away to reveal a raised design. This is inserted into the printing form alongside the text, inked up and printed as one. Afterwards the illustrations can be coloured by hand if required, although a book with coloured illustrations would have been much more expensive.

The collection of herbals from the 16th century in the Willoughby Gardner collection covers many of the leading publications of the time, including works by Otto Brunfels, Leonhard Fuchs, and Hieronymus Bock, often known as the ‘Fathers of German Botany’.

The Herbarum vivae eicones of Otto Brunfels was influential in that its drawings were primarily taken from life rather than copied from existing works, as was the standard practice of the time. They were also rendered as lifelike as possible instead of the more stylised designs which had been more common in German herbals. First published in 1530, the copy held in the Willoughby Gardner collection is a later volume from 1532.

In 1539 Hieronymus Bock published a herbal in his native language, German, which was later translated into Latin and made more widely available. Willoughby Gardner had a copy of the Latin translation, called De stirpium maxime, published in 1552, with hand coloured illustrations. What makes his copy special is that at some point someone has gone through and written the English names for some of the plants next to the illustrations.

De historia stirpium by Leonhard Fuchs was published in 1542, the copy held in the Willoughby Gardner collection also has coloured illustrations, although sadly is incomplete as a section of pages from the middle of the book is missing.

Additionally included in the collection is A niewe herball, or historie of plantes by Rembert Dodoens, an English translation of 1578 taken from an earlier French edition. Originally published in Flemish in 1554, with the French version soon after, many of the illustrations were based on those of Fuchs, although the text was original.

Other significant books in the collection dating from the mid-16th century include:

- Edward Wotton’s De differentiis animalium libri decem from 1552, a bibliography of the work of classical authors, he was considered to be the first naturalist to make a systematic study of natural history.
- Guillaume Rondelet’s Libri de piscibus marinis, from 1554. Rondelet was a physician and professor based
at the University of Montpelier in the south of France. *Libri de piscibus marinis* is his most famous work, and covers the full range of aquatic animals as scholars of this period made no distinction between fish and sea mammals. The book was a standard reference for students for nearly a century afterwards.

- Pierre Belon’s *L’histoire de la nature des oyseaux* from 1555. Belon was a French explorer, naturalist, writer and diplomat who had been in a position to travel extensively throughout Europe and often recorded the wildlife he encountered in situ. Like many others of the Renaissance period, he studied and wrote on a range of topics including ornithology, botany, comparative anatomy, architecture and Egyptology.

Amongst the bequest are multiple copies of Conrad Gesner’s *Historiae animalium* a five volume work. The first four volumes covering quadrupeds, birds and fishes were produced in 1551–1558, while the fifth volume on snakes was issued posthumously in 1587. It was Gesner’s intention that his great encyclopaedia should record all of known life both real and mythological, which is why sea monsters, manticores and unicorns are also covered!

Gesner was a doctor and professor in Zurich, and unlike Belon he was not in a position to travel as much, relying instead on submissions from friends and colleagues across Europe. First hand observation was not always possible, and because Gesner had decided to include everything written on the animals he featured, he wasn’t always able to guarantee the accuracy of the information. But as he explained, he thought, “it best to record everything that he has been able to meet with, in order that future specialists in the various branches of natural history should have everything placed before them and draw their own conclusions in each case.”
Two books which were actually published in the 17th century could also be included here, as work began on them in the 16th century. The first of these is one of the best known English herbals of that period. Written by John Gerard, it became known simply as *Gerard’s Herbal*, and was first published in 1597. However, the copy in the Willoughby Gardner collection is a later edition from 1633, greatly revised and expanded by Thomas Johnson, an apothecary and botanist who lived in London. Its success led to it being the most widely circulated botany book in English in the 17th century.

The second is *Insectorum sive minimorum animalium theatrum* by Thomas Moffet from 1634, this book has a complex history. It was originally conceived of by Conrad Gesner as he had planned an additional volume to his *Historiae animalium*. It was to focus on insects and build on the work of his friend Edward Wotton. However, it was not complete enough at the time of his death to consider publication and was passed to Thomas Penny, an English physician and entomologist, to finish. Penny had met Gesner when he attended the University of Zurich in the mid-16th century, and they had become friends due to the fact that they were both physicians with an interest in natural history. Penny took his responsibility very seriously, spending a great deal of time and effort working on the manuscript,
often collaborating with other renowned naturalists of the time such as Thomas Moffet, who was a close friend, and fellow doctor with a shared interest in insects. Unfortunately Thomas Penny passed away in 1588 and the manuscript was still not ready for publication, so the task passed to his great friend Thomas Moffet instead, who finally completed it in 1590, some 40 years after Gesner first began work on it! The reason it was not published until 1634 was due to difficulties in finding a printer willing to take it on as by this point a number of influential entomology works had been published, and demand for new material was waning.

The books featured here are amongst the most special of our treasures, but unfortunately they are also the ones least suited to long term display, which is why they don’t tend to feature as part of the rotating displays in the Library’s exhibition case in the Main Hall at National Museum Cardiff. However, we do regular Behind the Scenes tours where we are more able to showcase these special items, look out for upcoming dates in the What’s On guides and on the Museum’s website.

Kristine Chapman is Principal Librarian, Amgueddfa Cymru

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HENRY WILLIAMS, LLANCARVAN: 18th CENTURY CLOCKMAKER

Last year I had the good fortune to acquire a longcase or grandfather clock by the celebrated maker, Henry Williams of Llancarvan. Most large towns in the 18th century had a resident clockmaker and they were skilled craftsmen who largely made their clocks, as opposed to clockmakers in the 19th century who bought in clocks and merely applied their names to the dials. Henry Williams came to Llancarvan from Gloucester and he was a good maker of longcase clocks of both thirty-hour and eight-day duration. Not much is known about the life of Henry Williams and the main source for facts about his life is the book by Edward Cloutman and William Linnard referred to below.

Henry Williams was born in 1727 and was the son of Henry Williams, a sexton at St Stephen’s Church in Bristol, and Elizabeth Rowlands. He was educated in the Cathedral College in Gloucester and then apprenticed to a master clockmaker in Gloucester, John Washbourne. John Washbourne came from a long line of Gloucester clockmakers and was one of the leading clockmakers in the city.

After completing his apprenticeship, he moved to Llancarvan in the Vale of Glamorgan. Llancarvan, at that time, was basically a farming community but there was also a strong presence of those engaged in trade and manufacture. A move to a Welsh-speaking village might, on initial inspection, seem a surprising move but there were strong links between Gloucester Cathedral and Llancarfan since the cathedral had owned lands in the parish since the thirteenth century. So it is probable that the church authorities provided the house in which he was able to start his own business as a clockmaker.

He must have quickly established a flourishing business because by 1753 he could afford to marry Mary Davies who came from Llancarfan. They lived for a considerable time in Broad Hayes, a substantial house to the north of the church in Llancarfan. They had two daughters, Mary, who was born in 1756 and who died when she was just twelve, and Elizabeth, who was born in 1766 and remained at home and only married after her father’s death.

Henry Williams was not a prolific clockmaker compared to other known Welsh clockmakers. However, it would seem that he aimed at the high-end of the market, making clocks for the gentry and the local aristocracy such as the Wyndhams of Dunraven and the Morgans of Tredegar. Two of his clocks for the Morgans can still be seen at Tredegar House. It is clear from the construction of his clocks that he kept in touch with contemporary clock-making practice. He had at least two apprentices and also taught a local boy Edward Williams (no relation) who became his successor in clock-making in Llancarfan. Of course, in those days there would have been no thought of teaching Elizabeth the craft in order to start a family tradition.

A second occupation was not uncommon for rural clockmakers in Wales and in Henry Williams case he became a farmer, owning eventually over 300 acres. Indeed, he was awarded prizes for his farming achievements by the Glamorgan Agricultural Society, winning prizes for his turnips and for “best boar”.

In 1789 he was given the honour of being made Freeman of the City of Gloucester. He died in 1790 and is buried in Llancarfan Church though no gravestone now survives.

His work is to be found in a number of collections. The National History Museum: St. Fagans has several examples of his output, including a very good bracket or table clock, a month-going longcase clock and an eight-day longcase as well as a watch. Welsh bracket clocks of the 18th century are very rare and I know of only one other which was made by Watkin Owen of Llanrwst, who was part of a dynasty of clockmakers and, incidentally, one of his bracket clock is also in St Fagans. The month-going longcase clock is on loan to the magnificent Tredegar House in my home city of Newport. For decades its appearance has been blighted by the fitting of a pair of ghastly and totally inappropriate hands. I was very fortunate recently to examine this clock at St Fagans
where it is undergoing restoration and it is my sincere hope that the hands will be replaced by a pair of the correct pattern.

My clock dates from about 1760 and is very original and of high quality. It stands some seven feet six inches tall and like most early clocks it is very elegant with a long shaped door to the trunk. The case is well-constructed and is made of oak with a pine backboard. The door is constructed from quarter-sawn oak with the grain passing from front to back so that it will not warp in damp conditions. My good friend, Dr. William Linnard considers the case and indeed the exquisite engraving on the dial to have been done in Bristol which was a centre of excellence at the time.

The dial of the clock is constructed of a brass sheet with “Tempus Fugit” on a brass boss in the arch and the dial centre is finely matted. There are indicators for seconds and the date, the latter in a small aperture above the six. It possesses the original steel hands, the hour hand being very ornate and the best I have ever seen on a Welsh clock. The hands in all probability were the work of Henry Williams himself. Note the high quality of the signature and the place-name which is always spelt as Lancarvan. Behind the dial is a quality eight-day movement which exhibits the unusual feature of five pillars. These pillars hold the plates of the clock together and most longcases have only four. The extra pillar is an indicator of quality.

You will rightly have gathered by now that I am very fond of this clock: it gives me a great deal of pleasure! Since the heady days of the start of this century, the value of longcase clocks, as with most ‘brown furniture’, has plummeted. Now is a good time to go looking!

If my description has whetted your appetite I can strongly advise you to acquire a brilliant monograph on this particular maker. The book is called *Henry Williams Lancarvan* and is by Ed Cloutman and Bill Linnard (Tathan Books, 2003).

Ray Davies


Trefor Owen was one of the many eminent movers and shakers of the cultural and academic scene in Wales who departed this life in 2015. Upon Dr Iorwerth Peate’s retirement in 1971, Trefor Owen was appointed Curator at the Welsh Folk Museum (now St Fagans: National History Museum). It was a far-sighted appointment.

His family origins lay deep in the soil of the Llŷn Peninsula and Meirionnydd, and his boyhood holidays there influenced to a large extent his subsequent areas of research. In 1949, he graduated from Aberystwyth’s Department of Geography and Anthropology and followed this with an MA on a social study of the Glanllyn area of Meirionnydd. After a study of the urban geography of Ireland, he was appointed Research Assistant at the School of Scottish Studies of the University of Edinburgh, carrying out fieldwork in the Hebrides. This was followed by a year at the University of Uppsala, Sweden, an institution which is regarded as having pioneered folklife studies.

These experiences prepared him for his appointment in 1954 as Assistant Curator at St Fagans, where he remained until his move to the Department of Sociology, UCNW Bangor, in 1966. In 1971, he returned to St Fagans as Curator, overseeing the reconstruction of several of the buildings seen there today and in particular encouraging scholarship and research in the field of ethnology, always with the constant support of his wife Gwen. With this end in view, and in partnership with the University of Wales, Cardiff (now Cardiff University) he helped establish innovative postgraduate Welsh ethnology courses, several of which are still running today.

Trefor Owen’s classic volume *Welsh Folk Customs* was first published in 1959 and is currently being reprinted in...
William Smith, a surveyor from Oxfordshire, realised that a map showing where different rock layers - strata - came to the surface would be of value to both landowners and surveyors, not just for locating coal but also for agriculture, showing the different rocks and hence soils of different types. It would take him almost fifteen years to complete such a map.

Smith was born on 23rd March 1769 in the Cotswold village of Churchill where his father was the blacksmith. He had a limited schooling but at the age of eighteen he was taken on as an apprentice surveyor in the practice of Edward Webb in Stow-on-the-Wold. He showed an aptitude for measurement and mathematics and an eye for the shape of the land. In 1791 Smith was sent to survey and value coal mines in the Somerset coalfield south of Bath and, two years later, was appointed to survey the route for a new canal to transport coal from the mines.

Discoveries
During the six years that Smith worked on the Somerset Coal Canal, he made two fundamental discoveries. The canal was to be constructed in two branches in adjacent valleys and Smith noticed that the sequence of rock layers was not only the same in each valley but that the layers were always tilted towards the southeast. During his travels around the country to examine other canal routes, Smith realised that the strata of southern England always occur in a regular order and all were tilted in the same direction. His other discovery was the realisation that certain fossils were associated with particular strata; this meant that he could use the fossils to identify where a layer of rock lay in the sequence of strata.

The practical application of these discoveries was immediately obvious to Smith. Coal occurs in association with grey mudstone rocks, but such rocks appear in several places in the sequence of strata, both far below and above the coal. Using fossils, Smith could identify which grey mudstones were part of the coal beds and which were not and, with his knowledge of the sequence of strata, Smith could construct a map showing where the different rocks were present at the surface and where coal could be found.

When Smith explained his work to his friends Joseph Townsend and Benjamin Richardson in Bath on 11th June...
1799, they persuaded him that he needed to publish his discoveries in order to receive credit for them and, possibly, reward. That evening, he dictated the order of the strata to his friends and soon handwritten lists of the sequence of rocks from the coal up to the Chalk were in circulation. Soon afterwards, Smith sketched a map showing the rocks of the Bath area and a small map showing some of the rock outcrops extending across England. In 1801 he published a prospectus of his intended great work on the strata of England and Wales.

Over the course of the next fifteen years, Smith travelled widely across the country, working on commissions as a land surveyor and drainer. As he travelled, he took note of the landscapes and the rocks, gradually accumulating the information he needed for his map.

Published

The map was eventually published late in 1815 by John Cary, a leading London mapmaker. *A Delineation of the Strata of England and Wales, with part of Scotland* was a monumental work. At a scale of five miles to the inch, it was huge, over eight feet tall and six feet wide. It was spectacularly (and expensively) hand-coloured. It sold at prices starting at 5 guineas for the map in fifteen sheets, plus an index map and an accompanying Memoir. But although Smith’s listed over 400 subscribers to his map, few had paid in advance, and as his map had taken so long to complete, some of his subscribers had died. We do not know how many maps were sold, but it may have been in the order of only 350.

During the years of its production, Smith continually altered the map as new information about the distribution of the strata became available to him and there are at least five different issues of the map known.

Within five years, Smith’s map was eclipsed by another, in places more detailed, map, the product of the collaborative effort of members of the Geological Society of London under its first President, George Bellas Greenough. And within twenty years of the publication of Smith’s map, detailed geological mapping came within the remit of a new, government-funded Geological Survey of Great Britain.

Smith’s beautifully coloured map, however, remains an icon of the science of geology and is widely regarded as the first true geological map of any country. It is also the more remarkable in that it represents the work of one man, who single-handedly mapped, for the first time, over 175,000 square kilometres of Britain.

Today the map is much sought-after by collectors and commands serious prices (currently there is one for sale in London for over £90,000). The number of copies still extant is currently being researched, but it is likely to be in the order of 150. The Department of Geology (now Natural Sciences) in the National Museum of Wales is in
the unique position of holding nine complete or partial copies of the map, more than any other institution in the world, thanks to the foresight of its first Keepers, Frederick J. North, Douglas A. Bassett and Michael G. Bassett. North, in particular, rapidly established the Geology Department’s map and archive collections as one of the most important in the country and this has been built upon by his two successors. The National Museum is the only place in the world where almost all of the different issues of the map can be examined side by side.

Tom Sharpe

Tom Sharpe is presently at Lyme Regis Museum and Cardiff University and was formerly Curator of Palaeontology and Archives at Amgueddfa Cymru

A version of the article was published in Earth Heritage http://www.earthheritage.org.uk/

LLE HANES AT THE NATIONAL EISTEDDFOD

Once again this year, Amgueddfa Cymru will have a presence at the Urdd Eisteddfod and the National Eisteddfod. They are always fantastic events, which provide a perfect opportunity for the Museum to showcase collections related to the area in question. The latter maybe of particular interest as, this year, we will have a different type of presence from the one we usually have, which may lead to more permanent changes in the way heritage is promoted at the National Eisteddfod.

This year, the National Eisteddfod will be held in Abergavenny from 29th July to 6th August 2016. Though the Eisteddfod has taken place in adjoining counties several times, it will be the first time it has been held in Monmouthshire itself since 1913.

Many of those visiting the Eisteddfod won’t be familiar with the area and will no doubt be exploring the beautiful countryside during their visit. Those who are local may never have experienced an Eisteddfod but may be tempted to attend as it will be on their doorstep. This, therefore, provides an opportunity to reach out and engage Eisteddfod visitors in the rich heritage and history of Monmouthshire as the spotlight will be on the area.

During the 2015 National Eisteddfod in Montgomeryshire, a ‘Lle Hanes – History Place’ presence was created on the field for the first time. It brought together local history groups from across the county, Welsh speakers and non Welsh speakers, as well as some national organi-
Children sharing their memories of their visit to the Eisteddfod in order to contribute to a memory quilt on the Amgueddfa Cymru stand at the National Eisteddfod 2015 ©Amgueddfa Cymru National Museum Wales

sations, who all worked together to create an exhibition showcasing the history of the county. It was extremely popular with visitors to the Eisteddfod field but it also brought history societies in contact with one another in a collaborative manner and led to a successful partnership with People’s Collection Wales in terms of uploading local stories and details of locally held objects/collections online. Amgueddfa Cymru weren’t formally involved last year (those organising genuinely forgot to invite us!). By the time we found out, plans were very advanced but we nevertheless worked closely with the project to ensure our presence complemented the offer.

The National Eisteddfod of Monmouthshire and the district in 2016 provides an exciting opportunity to build on the success of last year, and create another Lle Hanes with Monmouthshire as the focus. Amgueddfa Cymru has been involved from the start and is joining forces with other national organisations (including the National Library of Wales, CADW and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales) and a whole array of local history and archive groups to bring these plans to life. By working together, we will have one joint offering which will include an exhibition as well as a full programme of events and activities. We will also work together to ensure that there is a benefit and legacy that goes beyond the life of the Eisteddfod in Monmouthshire.

The exhibition will be co-produced with the local history groups and will explore what Monmouthshire means to different people. Amgueddfa Cymru certainly has a wealth of objects related to the area and it will no doubt be a struggle to decide what makes the cut!

The scale of the project will be determined by the funding we secure between now and August but even at the time of writing, we have enough funds committed to ensure that it will happen. National organisations have also pledged staff time to run workshops with local groups and to collect oral history as well as digitising images for uploading onto People’s Collection Wales. All workshops will take place bilingually to ensure everyone can contribute. During the Eisteddfod week, both Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers will be manning the stand so please don’t fear if your Welsh is rusty or nonexistent. Translation equipment will also be available for any talks taking place in Welsh.

It will be quite a departure for Amgueddfa Cymru not to have its own presence on the field but it will mean that heritage organisations will not be competing against one another for visitors. Staff from Art and Natural Sciences are also involved with Lle Celf (Art Place) and Pabell Gwyddoniaeth (Science Tent), so we may reach more visitors by being more dispersed across the field. Should you be interested in finding out more about the project, or are interested in getting involved or attending one of the workshops, please contact me via heledd.fychan@museumwales.ac.uk or 02920 573268.

*Mae Lle Hanes yn brosiect cyffrous, ac rydym yn falch iawn ein bod yn rhan ohono eleni. Mae gan Sir Fynwy hanes cyfoethog, ac mae gennym lu o eitemau perthnasol yn ein casgliadau i’w cyfrannu i’r prosiect hwn. Cofiwch gysylltu os hoffech fod yn rhan ohono, neu ddog i’n gwell os byddwch yn yr Eisteddfod. Rydym wastad yn falch fel staff cael y cyfle i gyfarfod Cyfeillion yr Amgueddfa.
Further information about the National Eisteddfod can be found here: http://www.eisteddfod.org.uk/english/2016/

If you are visiting the National Eisteddfod, please pop in to see us and make yourself known. Our staff always love meeting the Friends of the Museum, as we greatly appreciate your support.

Heledd Fychan

Heledd Fychan is Corporate Affairs and Advocacy Manager at Amgueddfa Cymru

GWELL ANGAU NA GWARTH - DEATH BEFORE DISHONOUR

Every churchyard holds its secrets, its mysteries, its wonders, its window on the past, and St Ilan church at Eglwysililian is no exception. As keen ramblers we very often slip into churchyards to rest our weary legs. The peaceful, rural setting is ideal, providing both a stunning panorama of the hinterland through which we are walking, and a glimpse of the history of the community that the place encapsulates. Our group had explored the churchyard of St Ilan, on at least one previous occasion, and a keen enquiring eye had spotted an impressive, attractive memorial, fascinatingly inscribed thus: “Erected by public subscription in honoured memory of Annie Dorothy Lawrence of Abertridwr, who died 17 August 1908, yielding up her life rather than her virtue.” The group was intrigued, and lots of speculative chat ensued along the way, as you can well imagine.

Annie's compelling demise had caught my imagination and, on my return home, I consulted Professor Google! My search - simply the girl's name, Abertridwr, 1908 - immediately yielded gruesome results: the executioners report. One Noah Percy Collins was hanged in Cardiff gaol for the murder of his ex-girlfriend, on December 30 1908. He had stabbed her no less than seven times, poor girl, because she had “refused to kiss him”. He was a miner and lodged at the home of the girl.

My next recourse to Google produced a series of letters written by Dorothy, as she was known, to Collins. Now this unfortunate lady had become more than just a name carved cold on a memorial, her personality was beginning to emerge. She was articulate, well-educated and clearly had had a relationship with her subsequent murderer. Her letters gave him cheery news of her sister's new baby, thanked him for poetry that he had sent and called him “my dear old chicken”. She made reference to his proposed return to America “across the herring pond”, and concludes, “I could not help thinking of you as I looked towards Abertridwr”. From my 21st century perspective, I was intensely drawn to these long dead characters, and wanted more.

Further searches provided a comprehensive, compelling picture of the murderer. Collins had been orphaned when

Photographs of Annie Dorothy Lawrence and Noah Percy Collins which appeared in the article Collins on Gallows in the Evening Express of 30th December 1908
only a child, and was taken to the Ely School, operated by the Cardiff Union Workhouse for pauper children. Here he would have had a basic education, although evidently including poetry, and learned a trade, such as carpentry, tailoring or shoemaking. At fourteen, he took work as a collier at Maerdy and, four years later, at Cwmdare and Aberdare pits. He was an adventurer, seemingly confident, and undeterred by the poor situation of his early life. He set sail from Newport to Alexandria, but “paid off” at Hull, returned to Cadoxton and a job as an engine cleaner at Barry railway company.

However, he had not satisfied his desire for travel and he next migrated to Boston, taking a job there as a “saloon attendant” and thence to South Africa, where he worked once again on the railway. At the outbreak of the Boer War, he joined the Imperial Light Horse, and was decorated for his military service. Subsequently he returned to America to Boston, then New York and New Orleans. I admired his spirit and his drive and determination to improve himself and to explore the wider world.

And what of Dorothy? She was one of a family of two daughters and a son; her father a sailor. A flavour of Dorothy’s sunny, engaging personality emerges from information in the Welsh newspapers of the day. In her early years, she lived in Cardiff with her parents, where she is remembered by a host of school friends as a quiet, kind-hearted girl. For some time she was a faithful member of St David’s Welsh Church choir. Later she was known in the Aber Valley as a bright and industrious girl with firm religious principles. She had been confirmed by the Bishop of Llandaf himself, not long before her untimely death. A picture unfolds of a happy, gregarious girl. A photograph of her published in one of the newspapers of the day showed her looking older than her nineteen years, with strong features, fashionably dressed, her long hair carefully styled.

Collins talks fondly of Dorothy in her “walking-out costume with a nice white lace hat on. She was so full of fun and witty sayings, and proved herself so charming, I told her I loved her before the day was out”. The relationship between the two had clearly been close, and to an extent reciprocal, from the tone of Dorothy’s letters, but it seems Collins simply could not accept that she had given her affection subsequently to someone else. He was under the impression that she had promised to be his wife.

A highly detailed account reported his going to Cardiff to buy a revolver, but realising when he got there that he could not afford one, he settled for two stilettos. This murder was clearly premeditated, in his own words “he weighed it all up”. On the fateful morning, Dorothy had come down early to prepare food for her brother and, after he left for the mine, Collins pounced. What a story!

Researching and reviewing these events has proved fascinating and intriguing, saddening and thought-provoking, with many unanswered questions. A petition for reprieve was raised on Collins’ behalf and presented to Herbert Gladstone, Home Secretary of the day. Why and by whom?

First mention is made of public subscription for Dorothy’s memorial in The Weekly Mail, 12th June 1909. The inhabitants of the Aber Valley felt that her heroism should be perpetuated in some way and a movement had been started to erect a fitting memorial over her grave: that very memorial which had attracted us to her side. This enduring tribute, made by her friends and neighbours, is of a young girl, barefoot and holding out a small bunch of flowers in her hand. Endearing and delightfully feminine, it is thoroughly fitting. And here we are, more than 100 years after her demise, wondering at her dignity and courage.

If you happen to be walking in the area, and visit that churchyard, the memorial is immediately north-west of the tower on the west side of the main pathway through the churchyard. Stop awhile and spare Dorothy a thought.

Morag Law
NEWPORT BRIDGE: ALMOST THE LARGEST BRIDGE IN THE WORLD

In the October 2015 edition of the Magazine, Michael Spencer told the fascinating story of William Edwards and his famous bridge that still stands at Pontypridd, speculating that it might have been the largest span in the world when first built. Less well-known is the architect John Nash’s later design for a bridge at Newport that was more than twice the size and would undoubtedly have been the world’s largest span had it been completed. This article looks at the Newport bridge and places both bridges into a context for the world’s largest bridge spans.

For the background to the Newport bridge we need to say that there had been a series of timber bridges over the Usk next to the castle since around 1100, but there were no plans to convert the bridge into stone until the late 18th century. The justices decided on this in 1789 and invited designs, eventually selecting the one from John Nash over his three competitors. Best known for his work in London, Nash is not popularly appreciated for his work in Wales or as a bridge builder, although he did build two bridges in Cardiganshire, at Trecefel and Aberystwyth.

The proposed bridge at Newport presented particular problems, due to the tidal range of the River Usk (13m or 42ft) and the consequential depth of the river channel that had always posed problems for bridge builders. To address this, Nash proposed an innovative solution, with a single-arch stone bridge that would span the river channel without the need for piers. He submitted plans and a model to the Monmouthshire justices, but sadly these have not survived. The one surviving document in the Gwent Archives is a drawing for the timber centring needed to construct the arch, and from this accurate diagram we can calculate the span at roughly 86m (285ft), making it larger than any bridge known to have been built before that time.

In the event, the bridge was never built because the justices withdrew from the contract in 1792 and Nash was paid off, for reasons that are not clear, but seem to have been due to the scale of the technical issues involved. One critic even suggested using iron instead, which would have given Newport the world’s second iron bridge, after the famous one at Ironbridge that opened in 1781. With neither of these projects progressing, Newport had to wait until the 20th century for its iconic bridge when the Transporter Bridge was built.

We can only speculate on the design, although the Pontypridd bridge probably offers a good idea of the general form envisaged by Nash, if not the scale. We know that the crown of the centring stood about 30m (100ft) from the low water level and as the tidal range is 13m (42ft), this still left roughly 17m (58ft) between even the high-water...
level and the crown. Above the crown, the bridge structure itself with parapets would have added perhaps another 2m (7ft). This was a truly gigantic structure that would have towered above the river next to the castle, creating major problems when crossing the bridge with carts. Again, Pontypridd is our useful guide and the counterweight system used there was described in 1838, suggesting that the size of the Newport bridge would have rendered it almost impossible to use efficiently. 

When a carriage reaches the centre of the bridge, one end of the chain is attached to the hinder part of it, the other being secured to the drag, upon which a boy generally places himself, so that as the carriage descends upon one side the drag is pulled up the other, and this relieves the horse in descending."

Finally, we should consider where the Pontypridd bridge and Nash's design for the Newport one fit in the development of the largest arch bridge spans, but this is a task made difficult by the lack of precise dimensions for some contenders, particularly those that are long gone. It is further complicated by the increasing use of modern materials (such as iron, steel and concrete) from the late-18th century onwards, making direct comparison with stone or brick arch bridges difficult.

The world's largest bridge span in the Medieval period is believed to have been the bridge at Trezzo sull'Adda in Italy, built in 1377 but destroyed by military action in 1416. Estimates of its greatest span vary from 72 to 76m (239-252ft), meaning that it was considerably larger than the Pontypridd bridge (42m or 121ft), but still much smaller than Nash's at 86m (285ft). From 1416 the record was still held in Italy by the Castelvecchio Bridge in Verona (49m or 161ft) and that was surpassed in 1479 by the Pont de Vielle-Brioude in France (53m or 177ft), which probably held the world record until 1796.

The 1796 bridge at Wearmouth in Sunderland was of iron construction and the world's second iron bridge. This was built after Nash had proposed another single-span masonry bridge for Wearmouth, but that was rejected on the grounds of cost and the builders decided to use iron instead. The iron bridge was still smaller (at 71m or 236ft) than the proposed bridge for Newport, despite using modern materials, and it was not until 1874 that the world had a bridge with a greater span than Nash's planned bridge for Newport. That was the enormous Eads Bridge at Missouri in the USA, but by that time the torch had been passed to a new generation of bridge builders in steel.

In summary, the Pontypridd bridge was a revolutionary stage in British bridge building, but it was never the largest bridge in the world although it probably influenced Nash's design for the Newport bridge, as it did with other architects. Had the Newport bridge been built, it would have dwarfed all previous bridge spans and there does not appear to have been any bridge built since, using traditional materials, that could match its size.

Soon after the town cancelled Nash's contract they commissioned a different stone bridge, which was constructed in 1801 by David Edwards, William's son, who continued the family tradition with the first stone bridges at both Newport and Caerleon. The Newport bridge was replaced by the present one in 1927, while the Caerleon bridge survives to this day.

Peter Brown

Further reading

WELSH PARTICIPATION IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OF BRITAIN’S
MARITIME EMPIRE

Two portraits illustrate Welsh participation in the development of Britain’s maritime empire. One of these, a small full-length measuring 54.5 x 42.6 cm, was painted around 1764. Its subject is William Owen (1737-1778). The other was made in Canton, China, perhaps in 1791, and is of John Jones (1751-1828), a Captain in the service of the East India Company.

Owen is wearing the uniform of a Lieutenant in the Royal Navy (pattern of 1748-1767). Part of his right arm is missing. As he explains in an account of his services, “on the night of 7th Oct 1760 he [was] ordered to cut out the French ships La Baleine and Hermione from under the guns of Pondicherry, …[when] he had the misfortune to have his right arm shot off … by a Cannon Ball”.

William Owen came from a Montgomeryshire gentry family, the Owens of Cefyn-yr-Hafodau. Life at sea was dangerous and progress up the career ladder was difficult and required influence as well as talent. However, it was a socially appropriate career for a gentleman, it required little investment, and there was the remote possibility of making a fortune from prize money.

Families had to persuade a Captain to accept their son on board as ‘a young gentleman’ to build up the six years’ service needed to qualify as a Lieutenant. William’s father obtained a recommendation to the Secretary of the Admiralty who placed the boy with his son-in-law. William served in West Africa and the West Indies, before sailing for India in 1754. He was to be in India for a hectic seven years, while Britain was at war with France. William fought on land at the Battle of Plassey as well as at sea, being wounded with a musket ball. William, who was promoted Lieutenant in 1758, also took part in the blockade of the French base of Pondicherry and was again wounded in the attack on the two French ships in the harbour.

Owen went on half-pay when the war ended in November 1762. Promotion in the Navy was slow in peacetime and

[Image: Portrait of William Owen (Oil on canvas, 54.5cm x 43cm, c1763) © Amgueddfa Cymru/National Museum Wales]
in 1766 he accompanied Lord William Campbell, newly appointed as governor, to Nova Scotia. Campbell granted him an island in Passamaquoddy Bay (between New Brunswick and Maine). By 1771 there were seventy-three settlers on Owen’s island. As Britain and Spain then appeared close to war, he returned to England. However it was not until 1776 that he was recommissioned and ordered to India. Promotion followed and he was made Commander of the sloop **HMS Cormorant**. William did not live to see the end of that war as he was killed in a drunken accident in Madras in October 1778.

The subject of the other portrait, John Jones, was born in Swansea in August 1751. He came from a middle-class family and was apprenticed a merchant seaman in the West India trade. He then served on the East India Company’s ship **Queen**, on a voyage to Madras and China in 1770-1772. On his return he joined the Royal Navy. In 1773 Britain was at peace and he probably did so in the hope of improving his social as well as his professional status. He was less obviously officer-class than William Owen, and served as a Master, the warrant officer responsible for navigation, before being commissioned Lieutenant in 1782 at the end of the American War. He was now out of a job and re-joined the East India Company which he served for the next fifteen years. He was First Mate on the **Carnatic** in 1786-7 and of the **Deptford** in 1787-9. He was then appointed Captain of the East Indiaman **Boddam**, making three voyages to China in 1791-2, 1793-4 and 1800-1.

His private ledger survives for his first voyage in the **Boddam** and reveals that he invested £11,000 in goods to be sold in Madras and Canton including a pack of fox-hounds, making a personal profit of nearly £4,000. He was then able to invest £7,500 in Chinese goods in Canton, which would have sold for a further profit in London.

His portrait was painted by Guan Zuolin, a Chinese artist active in Canton between 1770 and 1805. He worked in a flat, clear-cut European style using oils thinned with water. In 1794 Jones bought St Helen’s House, overlooking Swansea Bay, which was rebuilt for him as a neo-classical villa by the architect William Jernegan. A view of about 1800 shows it set in its own parkland, grazed by Jones’s horses, cattle and sheep. Here he passed a comfortable retirement until his death in a carriage accident in 1828.

**Oliver Fairclough**

Oliver Fairclough is an Honorary Research Fellow at Amgueddfa Cymru
BOOK REVIEW

Lisa Tallis (Editor), *Cas Gan Gythraul: Demonology, Witchcraft and Popular Magic in Eighteenth-century Wales* T.P. (South Wales Record Society, 2015)

*Cas gan Gythraul* is a Welsh language tract against folk magic written in 1711 by an author known only by his initials: T.P. Lisa Tallis states that she has done the minimum of editing so as to keep the idiosyncratic style and spelling of the original. She has provided an English translation of the text plus an introduction that offers a detailed analysis of the work as well as putting it into the context of the history of witchcraft.

TP sets out the main reason for writing on this subject in a forward to the reader whom he addresses as “Y Cymru hawddgar” (The amiable Welsh) suggesting that the tract was intended for the literate general public rather than scholars and clergy. He sets out the reason for writing the tract: “fy môd yn gwybod fod llawer o rai angrhefyddol yn eich mysg, yn myned i ganlyn Dewiniaid, a swyngyfareddwyr &c. O Herwydd er fod y cyfrwyr rai yn an aml, eto er byn lle bythbo un o bontyn, llawer iawn a fydd yn asferol o gyfra o gyrsu attynt o bell ac agho.” (“I know that there are many irreligious in your midst, who go follow wizards and sorcerers [charmers] &c. Because, even though such persons are rare, yet where there is one of them, there are many that go to them from near and far.”)

The tract is divided into a number of distinct parts. T.P. starts by using Biblical references and illustrations in order to persuade the reader of the great danger in consulting wizards, soothsayers and conjurers. In a second section he goes on to list the types of forbidden customs that he believes are commonly practiced in Wales. They include such things as using the Holy Bible for divination, young girls fasting on Midsummer’s Eve to see who they might marry, consulting with travelling Cornish fortune tellers, consulting with those who conjure up fairies. They are from his own personal experience or learnt second-hand from friends and neighbours. Towards the end of this section he is moved to address the reader directly as if in a pulpit: “o dyn cais ddisgwyl at Dduw yn unig ac os wynt mewn cyfrw arbrawyd a elli ddywedîl gyd y r dyn gwahanglwyf os myny ti ac elli fy ngwahan.” (Oh man! Turn your expectations to God alone, and if you are in a sick state you can say, along with the leper, if it is your will, you can cleanse me.”)

Towards the end he summarises all the points he has made before in a section in verse, which begins:

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Meddyliwch Gymru hawddgar, a gwelwch faint yw'r bai
O fyned at Ddewiniaid, a phawb o'r llaw ar y brif 24
Sy'n ddrwg Gonsyrwyr aflan wrth mhofyn a hwynt buy
Nid allwch chwi fodloni Y Diawl mewn dim yn fwy.

(Consider, kind Wales, and see how great is the sin,
In consulting magicians and every one of the like
Who are wicked, corrupted Conjurers, and conferring with such
You cannot please the evil in anything more.)
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However, in his address to the reader there is a passage that suggests a fascination with these kinds of magic that goes beyond a wish to counter their prevalence. He writes that, after finishing the tract, he awoke one morning to find: “....lluniau anferth hyll gwedi i gwneuthur ar Wydr y Ffenestr wrth ba un yr oeddwn yn Scrifennu y Llyfr hwn...ac yr oedd llun rhyw fath o Anghenfil hyll gwedi ei oswod ar y rhan hynny or Gwydr ac oedd gyferbyn am hyny pro un y bydwn yn Serifennu.... ystrangc hwn gwedi unenathur gan Sattan i geisio gywchryn, rhac posod allan y Llyfr hwn.” (“...huge, hideous pictures had appeared on the window pane next to where I had been writing the book. On the piece of glass which was opposite my face as I was writing, was the image of a dreadful beast ... this scheme was deployed by Satan to try to terrify me into not setting out this book.”)

From all this, it is no surprise to learn that the author has a clerical background. Lisa Tallis believes T.P. to be Thomas Price who was an active member of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, a rector of Merthyr Tydfil and had connections to Llandaf. He died in 1729.

The tract offers a unique account of various magical practices, beliefs and traditions that were prevalent in Wales around the turn of the eighteenth century. As one of the earliest Welsh works devoted to popular culture, the tract is of interest not just to those interested in demonology and religious belief but those interested in the folklore traditions of Wales. For the modern reader the style may initially be forbidding but for those interested in history there is much to enjoy, nuggets that give insight into the
character and preoccupations of those living at the turn of the eighteenth century, which is an era that is poorly documented in Welsh social history. It offers a rare opportunity to see the world through the eyes of ordinary Welsh men and women in this period when Non-conformism was beginning to take hold and a reliance on magic was beginning to decline.

Diane Davies

POETRY CORNER

Coed Mammetz 1916

Y gri a ddaeth i ymuno a’r gad
I wirfoddoli dros eu gwlad
Bechgyn i汾ac, ac ar alwad brad
Tyr rasant i ryfel am antur rhad.
Llanciau llawen a’u calonnau’n llon
Yn llu i’r gad y llifon

Milwyr mentr us actant hnes wrrt hes
Eu calonnau ar dân, ond heb deimlo gwres
Di ddigwyl di-dystyr rhyfel
A’r gynau metel yn troi’r byd yn rwbel.

Bechgyn i汾ac a’u gwynebau a’u gwenau
Yn gwrddo yn nharan erchyll eu fflamau –
Y gri ar eu genuu yn ymgaledu
A’r breichiau bregus heb ymgeleddu

I’r bechgyn diniwed doethineb ddaeth,
Diniwedroedd a ffrwydroedd yn swn y saeth.
I alwad y gad cyfodon ei hoelion
Yr alwad lem am arwroldeb crelon.

Yng nghymleddwyd di-ystyr rhyfel chwyrn
Rha grith a mellith oedd y dinist hyn.
Diniwedroedd ddiflannodd yn oeru’r llaid
I uffern gwaedlyd y gynau dibaid.

Milwyr bregus rhes wrth res
Dry’n feini marmor gwyn di-les
’Rol antur an-ochel ar ei waetha
Yng nghymledd yr oerf fel ddadlatha,
Ymrafael a rhyfel a wnaethon
Yn llu i’r gad y llifon

Parchwn eu hymdrechion
Parhaed ein hargofion

Avril Jones has kindly provided a translation.

Mammetz Wood 1916

A call came to take up arms/To volunteer for their country
/ Young men responded to the traitorous call / And flocked to war for a cheap adventure / They were merry lads and with cheerful hearts / They thronged to take up arms

Venturesome soldiers they marched row upon row / Their hearts afire and not feeling the glow / And unexpected heat of a merciless and inexplicable war / And the metal guns which turned their world to rubble.

Young men with their smiling faces / Blushing in the thunderous flames of the guns / The cries on their lips were slowly freezing / And their fragile arms were not comforting

To the innocent lads late sagacity came / But their innocence exploded in the noise of the guns. / To the call to arms they had lifted their heels / That acute call for cruel bravery.

In the inexplicable complexity of a rapid war / Cursed and hypocritical was this destruction / Innocence disappeared into the cold mud / And the bloody hell of relentless guns.

Fragile soldiers row upon row / Became rows of white marble headstones / After an unavoidable adventure at its worst/ They were caught in the grip of an unthawing cold/ After thronging to take up arms/ And becoming embroiled in war

We revere their efforts / May our memories remain

MUSEUM NEWS

National Wool Museum Wins Award

Congratulations to the National Wool Museum which has won the 2016 “Best Story Told” award from Visit Wales. The Museum is already part of the Visit Wales’ Visitor Attractions Quality Scheme but this new award is for attractions that make an exceptional effort to create an enjoyable and memorable experience for their visitors.

Speaking about the news, Ann Whittall, Head of the National Wool Museum, said: “We’re absolutely delighted to receive this accolade. All the staff at the Museum work extremely hard to ensure the overall visitor experience brings the Welsh woolen industry to life with hands-on activities, live demonstrations by talented craftspeople, and historic machinery in action.”

Silent Explosion: Ivor Davies and Destruction in Art

This exhibition, which recently closed at National Museum Cardiff, was a major retrospective of the work of one of Wales’ leading contemporary artists. It aimed to show Davies’ enduring interest in the creative power of destruction and featured work in various media including paint-
Ivor Davies is one of the foremost figures in contemporary Welsh art. He came originally from Treharris, and is now based in Penarth and has enjoyed a long and prolific career within the visual arts in Wales. His work is stimulated by Welsh culture and politics which has meant that during his career he has been not only an artist but art historian and activist. He was awarded the Gold Medal for Fine Art at the National Eisteddfod in St David’s in 2002.

Silent Explosion was the largest solo exhibition by a contemporary artist ever staged in Wales and filled the Museum’s six contemporary galleries. Its format was not a traditional retrospective but focused on Davies’ preoccupation with the creative power of destruction.

Ivor Davies, *Caethni* (Oil on canvas, 160cm x 115cm, 1996) © Ivor Davies and with thanks to the Derek Williams Trust
The first room showed paintings and assemblages made in the last decade which are powerful expressions of Davies’ political engagement to protect the language and culture of Wales. The final gallery showed childhood drawings made by Davies during the Cardiff Blitz. In this way the exhibition took the visitor on a reverse chronological journey through Davies’ artistic life.

Although Davies has exhibited his work widely, *Silent Explosion* also featured many works not seen in public for over fifty years. They included mysterious, Picasso influenced paintings made during the mid-1950s when he was experimenting with adding broken egg-shells to his painted surfaces and a group of powerful abstracts painted in Lausanne, Switzerland between 1959 and 1961. Their colourful, textured surfaces revealed Davies’ knowledge of the latest developments in European avant-garde painting.

The heart of the exhibition dealt with Davies’ contribution to 1960s counter-culture. Using archival material and unique film records, *Silent Explosion* pieced together an extraordinary series of performances and happenings staged by Davies in Edinburgh, London, Bristol and Swansea between 1966 and 1968. At this time Davies was pioneering the creative use of explosives in his art, using them as transformative moments within complex, theatrical events. In particular, it featured archive material relating to the landmark Destruction in Art Symposium (DIAS) which took place in London in 1966 and featured performances and presentations by a radical group of artists and thinkers, including Gustav Metzger, Yoko Ono, Ralph Ortiz and the Viennese Actionists. A whole gallery within the exhibition re-imagined *Adam on St Agnes Eve*, which is a thirty minute multi-media performance that was first staged by the artist in Swansea in 1968.

There is also a book linked to the exhibition which is available from the Museum shop: Heike Roms (Editor), *Silent Explosion: Ivor Davies and Destruction in Art* (Occasional Papers, 2015).  

**National Waterfront Museum working with local communities**

The National Waterfront Museum in Swansea is helping local community groups create their own community museum. In collaboration with other organisations, the Museum has helped to set up a museum dedicated to the lives of those from the Penderyn Ward, Bleaumorfaes, Swansea. The community museum was officially opened last November. The opening was used as an opportunity for pupils from schools in the area to ‘take over’ the running of the Museum as part of a national *Kids in Museums* initiative, a project in which children work alongside staff and volunteers to participate in the life of a museum.

The museum is filled full of objects, pictures, stories and memories of those who have lived and worked in the area. It is hoped that it will create opportunities for people to volunteer and access training in archiving, photography, using computer software, scanning, digital storytelling and lots more.

Zoe Gealy, Senior Learning Officer at the National Waterfront Museum, expressed her delight with the project: “It is fantastic to be able to take elements of a national museum out into local communities where some people may have never been to a museum or any other cultural or heritage site before. We want to encourage residents to get involved with their local history to start with, learn new skills, share stories and perhaps even develop a hunger and passion to continue. Who knows, we could see community museums popping up all over Swansea.”

**John Piper’s Snowdonia works travel to North Wales**

You may remember that in 2014 Amgueddfa Cymru was able to purchase a stunning set of painting by John Piper of views of Snowdonia. Indeed you may well have seen the exhibition at National Museum Cardiff in 2014 which was inspired by Wales’ Celtic past, folklore and landscape at which we first had a chance to see them.

They were painted from the early 1940s to the mid 1950s when he was renting two cottages in the Snowdonia area. Using these as a base, he travelled round the area capturing the complex, semi-abstract forms and rich colours of the mountains.

Those painting, twenty major works on paper, have now travelled up to North Wales to two venues for an exhibition entitled *The Mountains of Wales*. They have visited Plas Gwyn y Weddw on the Llyn Peninsula and are now at Oriel Ynys Mon until 19th June.

The tour has been funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The funding includes a year long learning project to broaden engagement with the paintings, and has enabled Amgueddfa Cymru to share skills through the appointment of a dedicated Learning Trainee.

**Increase in number of visitors from outside Wales**

The number of people visiting Amgueddfa Cymru museums from overseas has grown significantly over the last three years. It has increased from 121,000 in 2012 to 152,000 in 2015 based on a six month period, according to a survey by Beaufort Research, which was conducted between April and September of last year.

The biggest attraction for international tourists continues to be National Museum Cardiff with one in four (25%) of its visitors coming from overseas. The National Roman Legion Museum was also a popular site, with 20% of its visitors classed as international.

There was also a rise in the number of visitors from the UK outside of Wales. This saw a rise of 7%, climbing from 27% three years ago to 34% this year. Over two thirds of visitors to the National Slate Museum in Llanberis this summer were UK tourists, making it the most successful of the national museums amongst that particular group. Big Pit attracted 48% and the National Wool Museum 36%.

**Diane Davies**
Retirement of Mark Richards

Many of you will know Mark Richards, who was Director of Operations and Deputy-Director General until his retirement in January. Mark was also a long-standing member of the Friend’s committee serving as the Museum’s representative and, in this role, was hugely instrumental in building up a close relationship between the Museum and the Friends. As a token of our appreciation for the work that Mark has done in ensuring the close collaboration between the Museum and Friends it was unanimously agreed by the Friends’ committee to mark his retirement with the gift of Life Membership of the Friends. The photo shows Mark being presented with a scroll and card by Richard Carter, Chairman of the Friends, at a recent Friends’ committee meeting.

Friends on Facebook

Yes, we have moved a step further into the internet age. Christabel Hutchings has set up a Facebook page for us. On it you will find news items and photographs about what the Friends, as an organisation, has been doing and also what is happening at the Museum. It also gives you a chance to respond by adding comments and asking questions. You can find us by going to www.facebook.com and searching for “Friends National Museum Wales”. Please give it a try and, of course, if you have your own Facebook page, do make sure that you “like” our page.

Free entry for Friends to new exhibition

In Museum News you may have read a piece on a new exhibition Treasures in Archaeology that is running at National Museum Cardiff until 30th October 2016. You will also have noted then that there is a charge of £5 for adults with a concessionary charge of £4. However, following discussions with the Museum, it has been agreed that Friends will be able to see the exhibition for free. In these times, when severe cuts continue to be made in Arts funding, it is likely that the Museum will be obliged to look at making a charge for entry to future special exhibitions. At present, we do not know whether Friends will continue to receive the concession of free entry but the Museum has agreed that Friends will definitely enjoy some sort of discounted entry whenever the Museum decides that there will need to be an entry fee for a special exhibition.

Funding of the Museum by Friends in 2015

In 2015 the Friends donated £20,000 to various Museum projects. You may be interested in how that funding was allocated. The largest amount was for £7000 for the continuing redevelopment at the St Fagans site, the money is part of the £50,000 that the Friends have pledged to give over a period of five years. £3500 has been given to the National Wool Museum Drefach towards creating a film showing the finishing plant at work; this will be shown on a screen in the finishing plant area as a continuous loop. Another £3500 has been given to the National Slate Museum for a permanent display on the use of electricity in the slate quarries. The National Roman Legionary Museum has also received £3500 for display facilities and a new sound system in the reconstructed Barrack Room. National Museum Cardiff has been given £15000 to underwrite conservation of the straddling panels. That leaves £1000 which provides for the Friends continued support of organ recitals on the Watkin Williams-Wynne Organ in National Museum Cardiff. I probably do not need to add that the Museum is very appreciative of the continued financial support given by the Friends.

Subscriptions for 2016/17

Forms were sent to over 200 Friends who renew their subscriptions by cheque, in January. Subscriptions from Friends who have set up standing orders should be transferred around 1st March. So if you have not yet received your membership card please let the Membership Secretary know.

Last year saw a reduction in membership in July, as records were adjusted for those not renewing their membership. We hope more members will continue to support the Museum through the Friends and will encourage others to join/rejoin in the months ahead.
Car parking charges at National Museum Cardiff

Those of you who use the Museum’s own car park will be aware that the charge has risen once again. So it is probably worthwhile giving the explanation that was given the last time it happened.

It occurs because the Museum charge is fixed by what Cardiff City Council decides to charge for parking in the same area. It all dates back to a planning agreement for the car park that was put in place when the centre block was built in the 1990s. Under this agreement the Museum has to charge at least as much as the fee that is levied by Cardiff City Council for public parking on the adjacent road, based on the rate for a full day’s parking. Therefore, whenever the Council increases its parking fees, the Museum is required to follow suit. Please remember, though, that all income does go back to the Museum’s enterprise company who Gift Aid their profits to the Museum.

Diane Davies

THE ART AND HISTORY OF BERLIN

“When the wall came down Berlin changed from black and white to technicolour.” These words of a resident of the city are a striking description not only of the city’s modern resurrection but also of the vibrancy and vitality of its ambience.

The Friends were very fortunate in their visit to Germany’s renowned capital to have a pleasant and comfortable hotel to relax in and a first rate guide for the excursions. Thomas is known to some of us from previous tours and he enlivened each day with his detailed knowledge and boundless enthusiasm while his endless store of interesting and amusing anecdotes added much to our knowledge of the city. There was some rain but the weather was for the most part glorious; early morning mists giving way to warm sunshine. Berlin's iconic buildings looked very imposing against a background of clear blue skies.

The first day began with a tour of the city whose major locations are familiar from years of news broadcasts: Checkpoint Charlie, the Brandenburg Gate, the Reichstag and Unter den Linden. In common with many European cities, Berlin has had a chequered history which is reflected in its varied and impressive architecture. Each succeeding government initiated ambitious building programmes and so the Kingdom of Prussia, the 1871 German Empire, the Weimar republic, Nazi Germany and ultimately the reunified Federal Republic of Germany have all imparted their particular ethos. The result is a pleasing disparity of style in which the elegant and elaborate design of the palaces and grandeur of the Museums and civic buildings contrasts significantly with more modern constructions. The contemporary architecture of the city is impressive in its variety with eclectic embassies, sophisticated government buildings, superb concert halls and the vast Sony Centre housing the film museum and many shops and restaurants. Several fine parks, tree lined avenues and the River Spree flowing through the city’s heart all make for a pleasing and stylish metropolis.

There are of course many reminders of Berlin’s recent cataclysmic history. A walk through the granite slabs of the Holocaust memorial, which was designed by American Peter Eisenman, is a deeply moving experience. Its design is stark and simple yet profound in its evocation of that great tragedy. Even the sight of ill-mannered tourists climbing on the stones to take their ubiquitous “selfies” cannot detract from the sombre grandeur of this fine monument. “See how people seem to appear and disappear as they wander through it like shadows” said Thomas and indeed this was a most poignant description. These sad remembrances were echoed during our visit to the Jewish Museum designed by Daniel Libeskind. Here are held documents and artefacts of the Jewish nation and, uniquely in a museum, an empty room which commemorates the loss of Jewish culture.

Travelling the short distance to Wannsee, a suburb of Berlin, we left the coach at the gates of what is known as the House of the Conference. Walking down a flower lined drive we entered a graceful building overlooking a lovely lake. It was, and still is, a peaceful and tranquil place but it was in this house, in January 1942, that the conference was held at which the fate of the Jews was decided. It was chilling to see here the original copies of documents detailing, with detached calm, the “Final Solution” and to wonder at the thoughts of the men who sat here at that time and took those terrible decisions.

After Wannsee we were much in need of something to lighten our sad thoughts and a stop at the charming small city of Potsdam...
provided this. Lunch in the pretty Dutch quarter was followed by a visit to Sansoussi, which means “without cares”. This fantastic palace was designed by Frederick the Great as his summer residence. Sansoucci is an elaborate riot of gilding, mirrors, enamels, china and much showy furniture which looks very uncomfortable. Set in a delightful park with fountains, elaborate floral displays and even featuring an intricate Chinese pavilion, Sanssouci is very much “over the top” but none the less delightful in its rococo flamboyance. We ended this day at Cecilienhof, the Palace in which the 1945 Potsdam conference took place. It was here that Churchill, Truman and Stalin met to try and resolve the problems arising at the end of WWII. Although officially styled a palace as it was the former home of the Kaiser’s eldest son, the Cecilienhof is very much in the style of an English country house. We almost felt we needed our National Trust cards to enter it.

Berlin is a magnet for art lovers and some of its finest museums are situated on what is known as Museum Island. Here can be found the famous Pergamon Museum which holds many ancient artefacts including the splendid Ishtar Gate and the reconstructed processional way with its lovely blue tiles decorated with magnificent lions. Unfortunately the room of the great Pergamon altar is currently closed for restoration so we were unable to see this magnificent survival. This was disappointing, but it did allow more time to admire the other treasures of the museum, including items of great beauty from the Islamic world. We also visited the nearby Neues Museum in which is displayed the famous mask of Nefertiti. This glamorous image is in such perfect condition it is difficult to grasp that she is 3300 years old, although her perfection is slightly marred by the fact that she has only one eye!

An undoubted highlight of our expedition to Berlin was the Reichstag, seat of the German parliament. The building was destroyed by arson in 1933 and bombed during WWII but has now been transformed into an important symbol of Germany’s rebirth by the British architect Sir Norman Foster and its great glass cupola is one of the city’s outstanding landmarks. We began this tour in a very pleasant fashion with tea and cakes in the rooftop restaurant. Outside the restaurant there is a panoramic area with magnificent views over the city and from there we had the opportunity to climb steadily up inside the glass cupola on the ramp which winds to the very summit of the Reichstag making for a truly memorable experience.

There are of course many other fascinating places to visit in this great city and some of the group enjoyed making their own discoveries. Berlin has very good bus and metro systems making it easy to get around the city and, as well as galleries and churches, there are fine shops in which to relish some retail therapy and a wide choice of restaurants and these were duly discovered and sampled. It was interesting then to compare notes with fellow travellers on their individual adventures.

The days passed quickly and our last scheduled stop was at the Gemaldegalerie which contains a world class collection of paintings including works by Caravaggio, Holbein, Vermeer and Botticelli and many other masters. This was a most agreeable way to end our stay in Berlin and we travelled on to the airport for the return flight with wonderful memories of a most interesting holiday. As ever our thanks are due to Val for yet another outstanding experience.

“I still keep a suitcase in Berlin, that’s why I have to go there sometime soon” sang the inimitable German actor, Marlene Dietrich, and it is certainly a city that merits several visits to experience and rediscover its many facets, its glories and its sadnesses.

Diana Wilson