

Cyfeillion Amgueddfa Cymru
Parc Cathays, Caerdydd CF10 3NP

Friends of National Museum Wales
Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NP

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Saturday 1st April 2023

**Reardon Smith Lecture Theatre, NMW Cathays Park, Cardiff
at 10.30am**

**A talk by Professor John Hilary on:
A Passion for Fine Art: the Messel Family and the Edwardian
Impulse for Serious Collecting**

When King George III, in his additional role as Elector of Hanover, issued an edict in 1763 expelling the Jewish population from Bentheim in NW Germany he set in train a series of events which culminated in the eventual arrival in 1916 of the Messel family as landed gentry in West Sussex. The surname of Messel, as was the custom among German Jewish families, was taken from the town of Messel where they had settled after their expulsion. There they had prospered in commerce and banking but in 1865, one, Ludwig Messel, left for Britain with gold coins sewn into his shirt hem as his father had died prematurely while Ludwig was still a boy and the banking interest had passed to his uncle. The importance of security of tenure was of extreme significance and appreciated by Ludwig and he sought and found a Regency villa in West Sussex large enough to accommodate his growing family and allow them to lead a traditional English country life embedded in the local rural society. The Messel family grew and so did the house which was completely redesigned; the garden and the country pursuit of gardening was magnificently embraced as was the Edwardian fashion of collecting art. The story of how Ludwig Messel's family acquired the country house, Nymans, a National Trust property, and started collecting art, is fascinating and will be told today by his great-great-grandson, John Hilary

John Hilary is Honorary Professor in the School of Politics and International Relations at the University of Nottingham. He is a writer and has published widely on global trade and international issues and served as the Executive Director of War on Want. His book 'From Refugees to Royalty' has been highly praised and his academic articles on art and art collections are much in demand in prestigious art publications.

Cost is £10. This includes the talk itself, followed by coffee/ biscuits in the Oriel Suite after the talk.

Please pay on the day by note/s or a cheque (made payable to Friends of National Museum Wales).

It would be helpful if you could indicate your intention to attend the talk by contacting Judith Foy either by email on judithfoy@yahoo.co.uk or by phone on 02920 498501