

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at 10.30am**

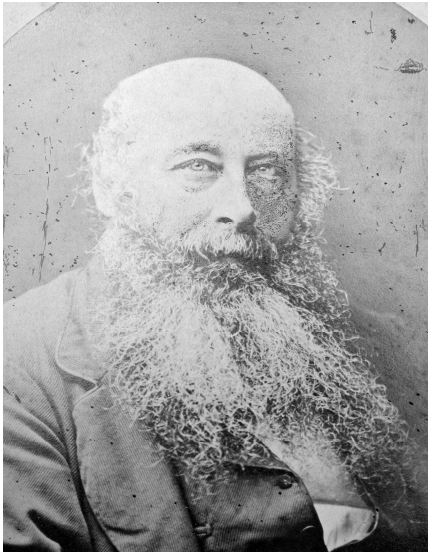
Reardon Smith Lecture Theatre, NMW, Cathays Park, Cardiff

**Clive Thomas**

Chairman of Merthyr Tydfil and District Historical Society  
will give a talk on

**Robert Thompson Crawshay – ironmaster turned photographer**

Clive Thomas is a native of Merthyr Tydfil and taught at three local primary schools before becoming headteacher of one for over twenty years. A past secretary of the Merthyr Tydfil Naturalists' Society, he was a founder member of the Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society and is currently their chairman. He has contributed to several local history publications and despite living in north Pembrokeshire for the last twenty-five years he has remained in close contact with his home town. Clive's talk will demonstrate that invention and ingenuity in Merthyr was not confined to making iron and money.



**Robert Thompson** was the fourth generation of the **Crawshay** family to manage the Cyfarthfa Ironworks at Merthyr Tydfil. In the 1840's his love of music led him to found the Cyfarthfa Band which was to become famous countrywide and flourish for three decades. At the age of forty-three however, he suffered a stroke which was to severely damage his hearing and have a long-term effect on his personality. At some time in the early 1860's he became interested in photography and his first efforts were taken and processed in the studio and darkroom which he had built within Cyfarthfa Castle. These early studies involved members of the immediate family, with one of his daughters playing a prominent but somewhat reluctant part. He was a member of the Photographic Society of London, which in 1867 became The Royal Photographic Society and

submitted entries to its Annual Exhibitions. By 1871 his entries were acclaimed as 'almost an exhibition of themselves' and three years later it was noted that 'Mr. Crawshay's interests have moved from portraiture to landscape'. Some of his photographs survive in print form, a number as the original glass plate negatives and these form an important photographic record of Cyfarthfa Castle and the surrounding countryside.

The fee of £10 for the talk; We accept prepayment online or on the day. Cash also acceptable on the day. Tea or coffee and biscuits available while you chat afterwards in the Oriel Suite. Donations appreciated.

- Cash –notes preferred
- Cheques payable to: Friends Museum Wales
- **OR** Pay prior to the event by BACS: Acct. name Friends National Museum Wales

Sort code 30-96-26 A/C no. 83447260 Please use ref: CRAWSHAY and your forename and surname

**If you are coming to the talk please email me: [f.peel@btinternet.com](mailto:f.peel@btinternet.com)  
to enable us to make accurate provision for refreshments.**