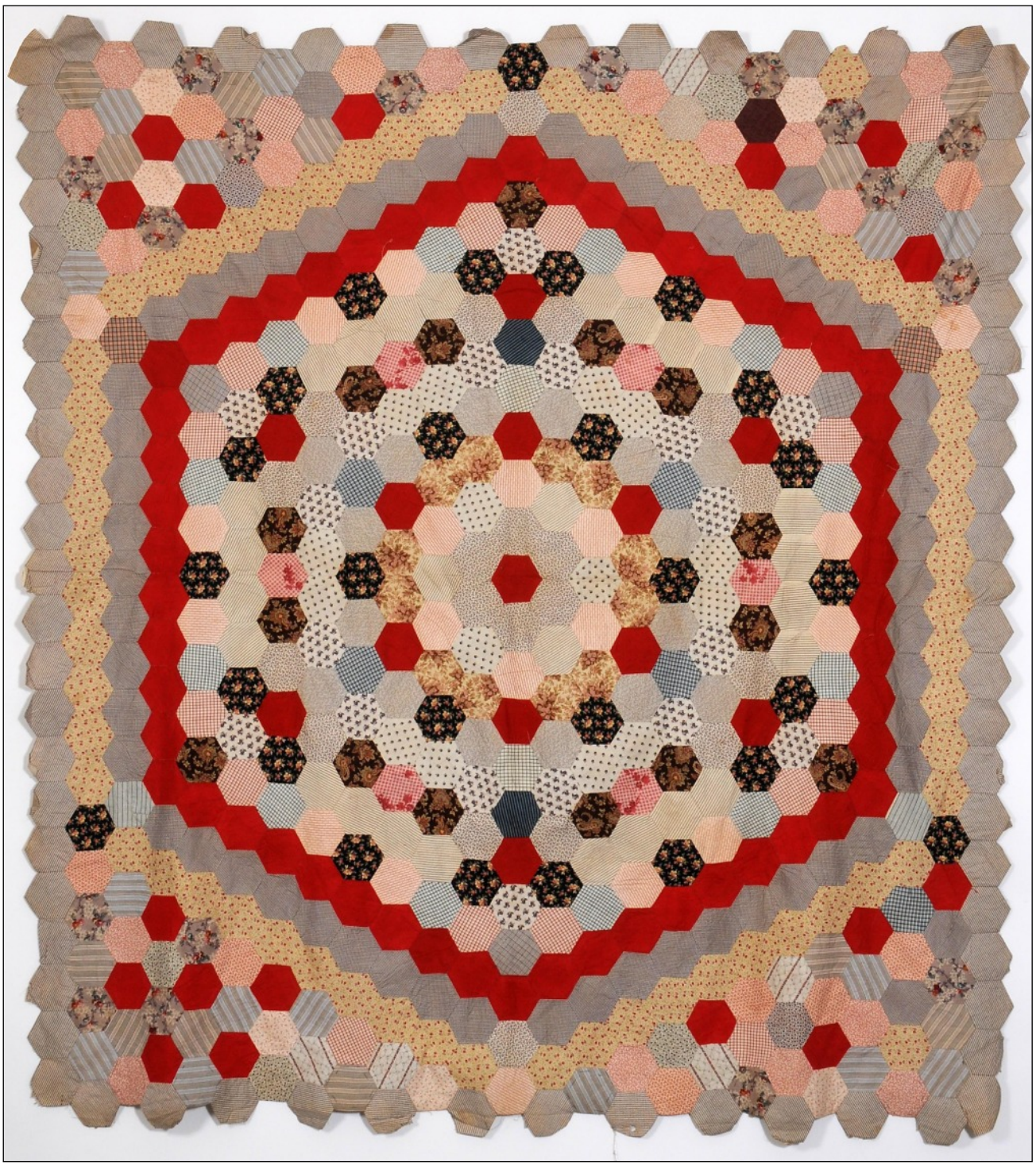
Friends' Newsletter and Magazine

February 2013



A MESSAGE TO OUR READERS

Once again we hope you will find something to enjoy amongst the selection we have put together. We range from the newly discovered and rediscovered to the newly acquired, from homely bedcovers to high fashion and from rare geological specimens to tinned peas.

A homely bedcover made by a dairymaid in 1868 adorns our front cover. It comes from the Quilt Collection at St Fagans and you can learn a bit more about the collection and how you can access it online, opposite. Film buffs, on the other hand, may well recognise the faces adorning the back cover; the picture is a still from the film adaptation of ***The Wings of the Dove*** by Henry James and is one of the illustrations for an intriguing article that traces the links between it and a workhouse in Abergavenny as well as the interconnections that exist between art, craft and fashion.

We have two articles which focus on the momentous years at the start of the 20th century. There is a major article on Edith Downing, who turned away from a promising career as a sculptor to become a passionate campaigner for women's suffrage. A second item is on the Austrian painter, Maximilian Lenz who was a co-founder of the Secessionist Movement in Vienna a key development in European art. Amgueddfa Cymru owns a visually stunning large-scale painting of his and the article traces his involvement with Gustav Klimt, nowadays perhaps the most famous member of that group. A further article introduces two recently acquired pictures of Margam House; the two paintings provide a rare insight into the visual portrayal of Wales towards the end of the 17th century and allow a better understanding of the cultural influences and heritage from the period.

What then has been recently discovered and rediscovered? Scientists from Amgeuddfa Cymru along with colleagues from a natural history museum in Paris recently took part in an expedition to Chile. They were searching for the order Diptera (flies to you and us) and the article looks at why certain flies are an important species in the study of evolution and you get the chance to view in close-up one of the new species they discovered (even if it is only 6mm long). The recently rediscovered concerns an important fossil record of a turtle, first unearthed by the founding father of London's famous Natural History Museum, which was long thought lost and was found to be living happily in our Museum's Palaeontology Department.

Poetry Corner makes a welcome reappearance. We are pleased to have been sent a piece inspired by the exhibition of work by the potter Elizabeth Fritsch which was held at the National Museum Cardiff in 2010. Her work is inspired by music, art and architecture so it is fitting it has inspired a poem in return.

As well as some of the recent happenings within Amgueddfa Cymru, highlighted in some of these longer articles, we have the regular round-up of what has been going on and being planned in Museum News. Similarly, Friends News gives a round-up of what is happening with your organisation. We also have a longer article on a recent Friends' Trip which gives an insight into the cultural aspects of the area visited and emphasises the enjoyment that comes from participating in one of Val Courage's trips away.

And the tinned peas? Look for an article on the range of minerals produced by humble calcium carbonate, everything from malachite to georgeite.

Finally thanks to Graham Davies for arranging to provide two of the articles as well as material we have used in others.

Diane Davies and Judy Edwards

THE FRONT COVER

Our Front Cover highlights one of the items from the extensive collection of quilts and patchwork held by Amgueddfa Cymru. The earliest example in the collection is from 1722 and is a christening gown worn by Peter Morgan of Golden Grove in 1722. The collection contains examples of bedcovers from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, together with smaller items such as cushion covers, linings from christening baskets and eighteenth-century petticoats. There are quilts in the collection from almost every part of Wales, though the tradition seems to have been particularly strong in the western counties of Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion. Examples of quilts can also be found on the beds in the re-erected buildings at St. Fagans: National History Museum. They are true examples of a folk art, items produced by Welsh women for their own use and pleasure.

Many of the quilts in the collection can be seen on the Rhagor website. Go to:
www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/rhagor/galleries/quilts/

Diane Davies

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I sometimes ponder upon the lot of journalists faced with the prospect of writing, say, a weekly column. Is not the need to produce copy, come what may, an unenviable task? What to do when faced with a total lack of inspiration? Oddly enough, it is not always easy to alight upon something to write about even when the requirement arises only once every four months. For one thing, topicality is definitely out; I am penning these words in the days immediately before Christmas but in the knowledge

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Cover illustrations

Front cover: Cotton patchwork bedcover made by a dairymaid at Llanharan House, Llanharan, Glamorganshire, 1886

Back cover: A publicity still from the film ***The Wings of the Dove*** (1997) showing Alison Elliot and Helena Bonham Carter wearing dresses designed by Sandy Powell and made by Patricia Lester. For more see the article ***From the Workhouse to the V&A and Beyond*** on pages 14-16.

Next Edition

Contributions for inclusion in the June 2013 edition should be submitted by the beginning of April 2013.

Please send items, either electronically or by post, to either one of the Co-editors:

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that in all probability they won't reach our readers until February, such is the lead time for a Magazine of this kind. So one has to forget about Christmas cheer and similar themes.

I am frequently struck too by the ability of the professionals to spin out a subject, however intrinsically slight , to create a full length article. There is plainly an art I do not possess in using ten words where one would suffice. It is somewhat reminiscent of Evelyn Waugh's hapless overseas correspondent William Boot who, on being cabled (in the abbreviated style used to minimise cost), "*Why unnews?*" replied, "*Nonews goodnews*", thereby prompting the response, "*Unnews unjob*". Presumably an insufficiency of words would bring in its train the 'unjob' fate today too.

Enough, however, of this somewhat reflective end-of-year digression. What is in prospect for the Friends in 2013? As ever, our Committee and complementary Events sub-Committee have sought and will continue to seek to develop the existing programme by introducing innovations which will, it is hoped, add to the appeal for existing members while encouraging others to sign up for the first time. Examples of fresh thinking, to cite but two, are the proposed St David's Day Tea and the tour of Llandaff Cathedral, to be followed by evensong, in April.

While the Friends' committees are charged with running all aspects of our activities, members of the Friends generally can, and do, play a valuable supporting role. One way in which this manifests itself is in assistance with our periodic mailings; no small task with a membership in excess of 1000. Again, suggestions for improvement are always welcome, as are contributions to the Newsletter and Magazine. So too the promotion of interest in the Friends and the Museum generally can be invaluable. It was John F Kennedy who posed the challenge, "*Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.*" We are always on the lookout for volunteers. End of homily!

Roger Gagg

EDITH DOWNING (1857-1931): ARTIST AND ACTIVIST

Diane Davies

Edith Downing at work

My eye was caught recently by a life size bronze bust of a woman studying "The Old Hundreth" in a small music book. She holds her arms across her chest with one hand holding one cover so that the other cover creates a diagonal which breaks the horizontal emphasis of her arms and the vertical lines of the folds of her dress. What was striking was the deep sense of contemplation and absorption in the music the composition evokes. The label proclaimed it to be ***Music/ Cerddoriaeth*** by Edith Downing (see illustration), a work produced in 1897 and named at the time ***Music Sent up to God***.

The catalyst for this article was what the label went on to say: Edith Downing was born in Cardiff and was a suffragette who spent some time in prison on hunger strike. What intrigued me to find out more was the contrast between the classical, almost academic, style of her art with the intense radical political activity she was clearly involved in. How well had she combined the two?

Edith Elizabeth Downing was born in Cardiff in 1857 and the 1881 census shows that when she was twenty-four she was living in Roath in Cardiff with her parents (her father was Belgian Consul and merchant), two older sisters and her younger brother. According to a letter she wrote to the Museum in 1929 her interest in art and sculpture was encouraged when she was a schoolgirl at Cheltenham College. Then, sometime in the 1880s, she moved to London with one of her sisters because by the 1891 census she was living in Chelsea and a student studying at the Female School of Art in South Kensington which was part of the National Art Training School (and which became the Royal College of Art in 1896). Female artists not only had to study in a separate building from the men but any models in the life classes had to be decorously draped on the grounds of propriety. Then, for a year from 1892, she studied at the Slade School of Fine Art. By the 1901 census she had moved to Tite Street in Chelsea, a centre of creative activity, where she was to remain until at least 1912. In that census she described herself as a sculptor who was living by her own means and working from home.

By 1892 she had begun to exhibit regularly at the Royal Academy and with the Society of Lady Artists (which became the Society of Women Artists in 1899). Her work was mainly in plaster although she completed a marble altarpiece with thirty-two alabaster figures for St Peter's Church, Wormbridge, Herefordshire. She continued to exhibit during the first decade of the twentieth century but during this period she also became involved with the campaign for women's electoral suffrage.

The first decade of the new century saw a re-invigoration of the long campaign for women's suffrage. In 1903 Edith Downing joined the Central (later London) Society for Women's Suffrage. In 1906 this became a constituent member of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) which was led by Millicent Fawcett. The NUWSS campaigned for the vote "*on the same terms as it is, or may be granted to men*" (basically universal suffrage) and they did this by holding public meetings, organising petitions and writing letters to politicians and newspapers.

Many became disenchanted with this constitutional approach which seemed not be making progress in the face of government intransigence. So Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters founded the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). It adopted a more restricted demand

The "Pageant of Empire" float for the Women's Coronation Procession, 1911

which was for votes for women meeting the complex set of property qualifications that applied to men at the time. It was a calculated judgement that such a proposal would find broader support than one for universal suffrage which would make women the electoral majority. However, it was not the rather arcane policy differences that set the WSPU apart from the NUWSS, rather it was their tactics as they adopted an increasingly confrontational approach, attacking whichever party was in power. In October 1905 Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenny heckled Sir Edward Grey, who would shortly become Foreign Secretary in Campbell-Bannerman's Liberal Government. When they refused to stop they were arrested and fined and when they refused to pay they were sent to prison. The term "*suffragette*" was coined to distinguish those in the new movement from suffragists and although a feminised diminutive it was wholeheartedly embraced. They promised "*deeds not words*" and proceeded to fulfil that promise.

Edith Downing was also becoming disenchanted with the lack of progress being made by the NUWSS and in 1908 she joined the WPSU Chelsea branch together with her sister. In an article she wrote soon after for the weekly Newsletter of the WSPU, ***Votes for Women***, she referred to "*the futility of quiet work*". At first she used her artistic ability to create works that could be sold to raise funds for the WSPU so in 1909 she produced ceramic statuettes of Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenny for sale at an exhibition organised by the WSPU. Her most important artistic work though was as a designer of the WPSU

Edith Downing, ***Music Sent Up to God*** (Bronze, height 64cm, 1897)

processions, which were becoming an increasingly important part of publicising the WPSU message. On 18th June 1910 the WPSU organised a huge march through London called "Prison to Citizenship". Together with Marion Wallace-Dunlop she designed a float, "The Prisoners Tableau". The float celebrated the hunger strikers who had endured forced-feeding and "*faced death without flinching*". It was drawn by two white horses and featured a suffragette in prisoners garb surrounded by young women in white dresses and green and purple caps looking on in admiration.

That summer had seen a suspension of militant activities whilst a new suffrage bill was introduced in Parliament. However, when the House of Commons refused to pass the new bill, the WPSU ended the truce and, on what became known as Black Friday (18th November 1910), its members demonstrated in Parliament Square and many were arrested, including Edith Downing. She was released without charge but five days later she was arrested for throwing a stone through a window of Somerset House and this time was sentenced to seven days imprisonment.

June 1911 saw perhaps the biggest and most spectacular of the WSPU's processions. This was the Women's Coronation Procession held a week before the coronation of George V and which was intended to enlist the support of the King in getting the Conciliation Bill of 1911 through Parliament. This Bill would have extended the franchise to wealthier property-owning women. The procession was led by two suffragettes on horseback with one in armour personifying Joan of Arc. In addition there was a band playing Ethel Smyth's new-completed "March of the Women" which became the suffragettes' anthem. Edith Downing was again involved with Marion Wallace-Dunlop in designing the float, "The Pageant of Empire". This was intended to represent the unity of the British Empire (see illustration on page 4). On top of the float were two figures representing East and West and on the lowest tier women depicting the various colonies and dominions.

With the failure of the Conciliation Bill in parliament, the window-smashing campaign intensified and on 1st March 1912 Edith Downing was amongst those who marched through the West End smashing windows with stones and hammers. She was arrested for, rather appropriately, breaking the windows of a fine-art dealer in Regent Street. In her speech to the jury she spoke of police brutality and her regret that law-abiding women should be compelled to take part in such actions as breaking windows. While in Holloway Prison she took part in a mass hunger strike and was force-fed before being released before completion of her sentence.

It is noticeable that after that event there are no records of her as a productive artist or as an activist. The reasons can only be speculated. Withdrawal from political activism might be due to the increasing militancy of the WSPU with greater and greater acts of violence and an increasingly autocratic and idiosyncratic leadership of the movement by Christabel Pankhurst. However, the absence of any further artistic activity suggests that maybe her health was permanently damaged by the brutal treatment that was involved in force-feeding.

The story of her sculptures is taken up again in December 1928, by which time she is living in Peaslake, near Guildford. She writes to the National Museum offering nine of her sculptures and, moreover, she is prepared to have them cast in bronze. The Museum, after consulting Sir Gascombe John, warmly welcomes her generosity and, when they are finally received in 1930, reports that it was delighted to be able to display many of them in the main entrance. At present three of them are on public display, ***Music Sent Up to God*** and ***The Mask Seller*** in Gallery 15 and ***Avarice*** on the west stairs.

So Edith Downing's legacy is a set of fascinating sculptures and, of course, the success of the campaign to give women the vote. It took, though, a World War to shift political opinion and it was not until 1918, in ***The Representation of the People Act***, that women over thirty were enfranchised. Finally, in 1928, another Act was passed which gave women the vote on the same terms as men. However, Edith Downing lived to see all that happen.

Sources

Sources on Edith Downing's life and work are few and far between and I have tried to restrict myself to facts that do seem verifiable. The most important source is:
Elizabeth Crawford, ***Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide, 1866-1928*** (Routledge, 2001)
I also consulted www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk and various Census returns available on-line.

I wish to thank Clare Smith for the opportunity to look at the correspondence between Edith Downing and the Museum.

DANCE-FLIES FROM CHILE

All species are constantly evolving, and their current distributions and diversity, even in the local context of Wales, have been determined by factors such as climate change, continental drift and ecology. Scientists must therefore study organisms in a global context in order to properly appreciate how they fit into the Tree of Life.

This is very much the case with insects, including flies (Diptera). Their major evolutionary lineages appeared in the remote past, at places now separated by the drifting apart of continents. For instance, many major species of Diptera evolved in Patagonia and Australasia, at a time when these lands formed part of the ancient supercontinent of Gondwana.

In temperate regions, flies known as 'dance-flies' (Empidoidea) are numerous and may account for 10% of all fly species. Some feed on flowers and are important in

Empis sp. An undescribed species of the *macrorryncha* group (about 6 mm long).

pollination, while most are fierce predators of other invertebrates helping significantly to regulate pests. Still others have complicated mating rituals involving spectacular display flights and the presentation of dead insects as 'presents'! The Empidoidea first appeared in Gondwana in Jurassic times, at least 160 million years ago. As the supercontinent broke up and the continental fragments drifted apart, there was a massive increase in diversity of these flies.

Collaboration between entomologists at Amgueddfa Cymru and other museums around the world has improved our understanding of the evolutionary history of these flies. One such project saw a team of entomologists from Amgueddfa Cymru and the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris embarking on an expedition to Patagonia sponsored by CAFOTROP (CAnopée des FOrêts TROPicales). The objective was to look for new Gondwanic species in the dense temperate rainforests of Chilean Patagonia using specialist sampling methods of close searching, netting and trapping. This was followed by sifting, sorting and preserving the catch, ready for preparation and identification of the specimens once back in the laboratory. These southern temperate rainforests proved very rich in Empidoidea with three weeks collecting resulting in some 8,000 specimens, including many species unknown to science.

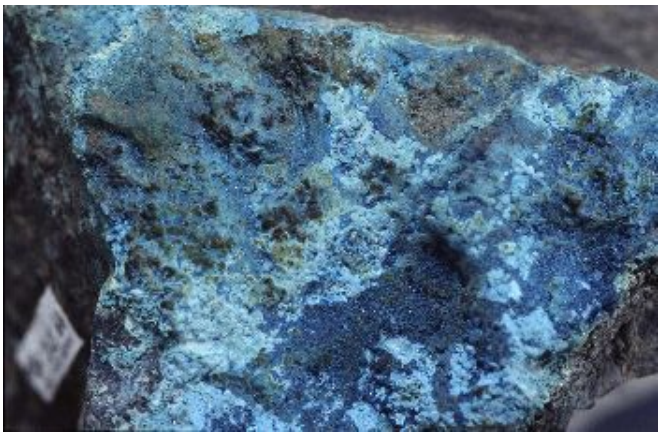
Many genera have been identified that are now restricted to locations that were once part of Gondwana, such as *Ceratomerus*, *Clinorhampha* and *Cladodromia*. Particularly exciting was finding new species of the *Empis macrorryncha* group of flies that are closely related to species of the same group known from SW Australia. This suggests these species evolved from a common ancestor which probably lived before the Gondwana continent fragmented.

Adrian Plant

Adrian Plant is Curator of Diptera at Amgueddfa Cymru

MALACHITE, GEORGEITE AND TINNED PEAS

J. B. S. Haldane was an eminent biologist in the middle of the last century, with a gift for the memorable phrase. He was a Marxist, an active member of the Communist Party and also sometime spy for the Soviet Union. In 1979 he was asked what inferences could be drawn from biology about the nature of God. His rather flippant reply was that God showed an "*inordinate fondness for beetles*", to judge by the many species of beetle he created. A mineralogist might well make a comparable remark about the many copper carbonate minerals (some strictly hydroxycarbonates and some containing other metals as well as copper). The best known is probably the characteristically bluish-green malachite, often occurring in dark and light bands, the name coming from Old French and eventually



Amorphous pale blue georgeite with dark blue connellite from Britannia Mine, Gwynedd. Photo: D.I. Green

going back to the Greek for "mallow". You can find well-polished samples in every mineral shop. In the recent television series ***The Story of Wales*** viewers saw Huw Edwards handling a fist-sized piece of malachite in a Bronze Age (about 4000 years old) copper mine under the Great Orme, near Llandudno. Some years ago I was on a tourist visit to Chatsworth House in Derbyshire, the rather grand home of the Duke of Devonshire. In one of the rooms I noticed a side table, the round top of which was about 1 metre across and obviously made of malachite. It was by far the largest piece of malachite I had ever seen. There was a bigger surprise some years later when I was in Russia. In the Summer Palace of the Tsars at St Petersburg there is a "Malachite Room" where vases, pilasters, columns, etc., are covered in malachite. They were made by the "Russian mosaic" technique, rather like the use of veneers in cabinet making, the relatively soft nature of malachite enabling it to be cut into very thin slices. The supplies of malachite came from large deposits in the Urals. There is also another "Malachite Room" in the Winter Palace in St Petersburg, now part of the Hermitage Museum.

All the copper carbonate minerals have colours in the blue to green range, due to the copper (Cu^{2+} ion), with the colour variations due to the different crystal structures of the minerals. The blue colour of the copper sulphate crystals found in every chemistry set arises in the same way. Azurite, a relatively uncommon copper carbonate mineral (formed only in the presence of high pressures of carbon dioxide), is deep blue, as its name implies. Aurichalcite, also rather uncommon, was named after the Greek for mountain copper, is of somewhat variable colour but usually at the green end of the colour range of copper carbonates. Corrosion of copper and copper alloys such as brass produces variable blue-green-yellow deposits, largely carbonates, the nature of which depends on the composition of the metal and the corrosion conditions.

One of the rarest copper carbonate minerals is georgeite. So far the light blue mineral has been found in only two localities: the Carr Boyd nickel mine in Western Australia and the Britannia copper mine in Snowdonia. The mysterious blue colour of Glaslyn, a lake near the mine below the summit of Snowdon, is caused by copper salts leached from the same deposits as those mined. Georgeite was named after George Herbert Payne, who had been Chief of the Mineral Division at the Government Chemical Laboratories in Perth, Western Australia. We are fortunate that the National Museum in Cardiff has samples of georgeite, although these are not available for public view. In contrast to the rarity of the natural mineral, a synthetic copper/zinc georgeite is made by the ton, as an unstable intermediate, in the manufacture of copper/zinc oxide catalysts at a factory, formerly owned by ICI and now owned by Johnson Matthey, at Clitheroe in Lancashire. The catalysts, also made in other factories across the world, are used in various chemical processes including methanol production. In about 1990 experimental work we did in the School of Chemistry at Cardiff University showed that the transitory blue precipitate formed initially was a form of georgeite (containing both copper and zinc) and this then changed into a bluish-green mixture of malachite and aurichalchite. The instability of georgeite explains why it is found so rarely in nature.

Malachite green is, as they say, altogether another kettle of fish. A synthetic dyestuff, invented in 1873, so-called because its colour resembles that of the mineral malachite, is a purely organic chemical and does not contain copper or any other metal. Its colour arises from its complex molecular structure. In the 1950's I remember being told that the Dyestuffs Division of ICI sold more tons of malachite green dye than any of their other products, although it did not bring in its largest profit. The major consumers were not, as one might think, clothing manufacturers but producers of tinned processed peas. It is unfortunate that the canning process for peas leads to almost complete loss of the natural green colour and malachite green was added to compensate for this. At that time contents did not have to be listed on tins of food and the presence of malachite green in tinned processed peas was not publicly disclosed, indeed we were told to keep it secret. Today there is still the need to compensate for loss of the natural colour, but malachite green is no longer used. Its presence in food products is now banned in many countries, including the UK, because it is possibly mutagenic. Typically now, the label on a tin of Farrows Marrowfat Processed Peas lists "Colours (E101, E133)". E101 is riboflavin, vitamin B2, which has a yellow colour; E133 is a synthetic dye, Brilliant Blue FCF. Together they give an appropriate green colour to the peas. Neither copper nor any other metal compound has been added.

Michael Spencer

Further reading

P. A. Williams, ***Oxide Zone Geochemistry*** (Ellis Horwood, New York, 1990), especially Chapter 10, "Carbonate Minerals".

P. A. Williams et al., T***he Synthesis and Composition of Georgeite and Its Reactions to Form Other Secondary Cpper(II) Carbonates*** in ***Mineralogical Magazine***, Vol. 55, pp. 163-166 (June 1991).

J. R. Jennings, M. S. Spencer, P. A. Williams et al., ***Georgeite and Azurite Precursors to Methanol Synthesis Catalysts*** in **Applied Catalysis A: General**, Vol. 85, pp. 1-10 (1992).

FROM THE WORKHOUSE TO THE V&A AND BEYOND

Judy Edwards

Abergavenny Workhouse with restoration nearing completion

Sustainable development seems to be one of the 'in' themes of the day. This article provides a vivid and wholly Welsh example of what happened to part of an historic building when an imaginative couple decided to re-develop a section of a decaying workhouse in Abergavenny. It will also be considering the growing interest in the interlinking of fashion and art.

Abergavenny is not without a colourful past: it had a Roman settlement to help curb the war-like activities of the Silures and the Normans built a castle, around which the town developed with Baludin founding a Benedictine Priory. A successful market place has operated there since the 13th century but Owain Glyndwr swept down from the north and left Abergavenny in ruins in 1414. Henry VIII breathed new life into the town when he gave it a Royal Charter and the spoils of dissolved monastic institutions provided for the endowment of King Henry VIII Grammar School.

Returns to Parliament in 1776 listed some 2000 workhouses with a capacity of 90,000 places. Three years later it was reported in the 'State of the Poor' records that a sort of *Poor House* existed in Abergavenny for those who could not be housed elsewhere. At that time there were 70 regulars and another 30 casual pensioners who also received a small allowance. The accounts were kept on loose paper by a person alleged to have become insane and who ultimately destroyed them!

The Workhouse in Abergavenny was structured like so many others with a single entrance and a range of buildings that included a chapel and clock tower, two small hospitals, including one for infectious diseases and a railway siding for the delivery of coal. The whole enterprise stretched across several acres adjacent to what is now Nevill Hall Hospital. The central building had upper floors that allowed the separate cobbled and walled exercise and work yards for the sexes to be overseen. The range of activity in such a place can be gauged by the policy to educate, feed and clothe children and to persuade physically able adults that the workhouse was a place to be avoided at all costs! The general appearance can be imagined given that they were often called *pauper bastilles*. There is no doubt that these buildings were meant to engender fear amongst the able-bodied poor, the mentally ill and elderly. Dickens, as a young man, lived only a few doors from a major London Workhouse and his novel ***Oliver Twist*** throws considerable light on the lives of the poor at that time.

The single entrance to the Workhouse, through which potential inmates and visitors alike had to pass, was guarded by a porter (see below). Immediately all clothing was removed and sent down in cages to be steam-cleaned rather than laundered in case garments came apart. After supervised bathing there was a requirement to wear a uniform, with prostitutes identified by the colour yellow. Families were split up into separate parts of the workhouse and punished if contact was attempted. Perhaps a reader can throw some light on why this was necessary.

The daily workhouse schedule comprised: 6.00am Rise; 6.30am Breakfast; 7.00am Work; 12.00 noon Dinner; 1.00pm Work; 6.00pm Supper and 8.00pm Bedtime. It seems likely that inmates were locked in their rooms at night given the concentration of urine found in most of the cell walls when re-development was taking place! Even though the workhouse was supposed to provide education

Workhouse's only entrance and porter's lodge

for children and training for work, reading and writing formed no part of that education and no-one who was discharged was likely to be able to compete for work in local developing industries.

The Abergavenny Workhouse crumbled over time, with part of the land being cleared for housing and other buildings, and the clock tower and railway siding disappearing. A corner tower was a common feature in workhouse design and, following a major fire, this was demolished and the pressure of collapse pushed it into the basement which provided a range of usable building material once located!

When Charles and Patricia Lester moved to a village close-by in the early 1970s it was unlikely they even knew of the local workhouse. Charles was joining ICI at Pontypool and Patricia had left secretarial appointments at Oxford University. Patricia however, began increasingly to focus on the development of her untrained but not insignificant artistic talents. She was interested in fashion and got more and more involved in dressmaking and fashion design, making her own patterns, trying out various fabrics, particularly silk and velvet and eventually turning one bedroom into a work space which included the kind of furniture one would only have seen in an old-fashioned drapers: lots of glass fronted drawers to hold beads, buttons, thread, fabric samples and bobbins. Her sewing machine was upgraded and now included the best quality domestic sewing machine available at the time and later she invested in an industrial overlocker which enhanced the 'finishing' of seams.

After some time, a small, but very exclusive shop in Bath bought a complete collection and, not long afterwards, Harrods in London bought a range of garments. However, it was not too long before there seemed to be a tightening of belts and all buyers insisted on 'consignment' (no garment paid for unless sold and never more than one or two of any design taken); this particularly occurred when

The singer, Justin Lavender, in a costume for an opera by Opera At Holland Park

Fashion in Motion at the V&A

she began to concentrate on silk and silk-velvet. Specialist outworkers had by then become necessary and a system of training also commenced. Soon orders began to arrive from America as a consequence of the fashion weeks in London and Paris, which Patricia attended, setting up her stall with the models who accompanied her. I do not suppose anyone realised that telephone calls were answered in the kitchen and transferred to the workroom in the converted bedroom!

In the meantime Charles found himself facing some difficult decisions when ICI decided to re-locate in Yorkshire. Eventually he decided to accept a teacher training option and spent three years at the local comprehensive school before moving to Monmouth Boys School for a further eight years. During this period he supported his wife in a number of different ways such as purchasing a small screen printing table and screens from ICI and developing ideas for improving fabric dying and processing. A real 'cottage industry' was beginning to appear with very fine pleated silk designs from a textile process unique to the Lesters.

By the early 1980s it became clear that space was at a premium. Patricia was increasingly successful as gauged by interviews from the national press, television and fashion magazines. Accommodation was urgently sought to prevent the business taking over their home. Someone told them about empty parts of the workhouse and curiosity made them take a look. They found that the entrance to the workhouse had not changed and the interior of a building, that was of interest to them, laid its history bare: leaking roof, a wide use of asbestos, scary looking beams, suspicious drains and corridors with cell-like rooms.

Charles had gained considerable experience of building problems in his youth and after much discussion and meetings with the Bank Manager they decided to develop their business in the Abergavenny Workhouse, setting out to make the necessary changes to create a pleasing work and business environment. Much later, when there could

be no turning back, they admitted that, if a more thorough analysis of the costs and the implications of what had to be undertaken for health and safety had been done, they would never have dared to take on the necessary work to bring the building alive again.

The builders, although described as 'a tough lot from the Valleys', refused to enter the building after dark unless there were more than three of them, several saying that they had 'seen things'! At one point so much was taken from the centre of the building that the end wall, of what is now the main studio, fell out. At another memorable period there was some difficulty with John Petts, the stained glass artist, who was in an adjacent part of the workhouse when the sewers gave up the ghost and began to flood the cobbled yards before new ones could be installed.

It took a couple of years before it was possible to open the building for business and enable the seamstresses to work on-site but by 1983 there was accommodation for printing and dying, a work room with an adjacent studio for clients to see the creations and an office for administration and packing. Eventually the basic equipment for screen printing bought from ICI began contributing to experiments with dying and printing and soon the workhouse details became submerged as the new role of the building became more obvious and attractive. The extraordinary colours of the silk alone came to dominate a visit to the studio.

The circumstances in which fashion and art intertwine are now accepted as many and varied, including photography, jewellery, fabric design, theatre and film. ***Vogue*** and other magazines on the international market have used fabrics designed and printed at the Workhouse to promote colour and context. For example, during the 1990s, the Lesters were invited to participate in a series of talks given by fashion designers at the V&A. Patricia decided to use a model instead of photographs to illustrate their talk and this was so popular that a subsequent series called ***Fashion in Motion***, involved models dancing through the halls of the V&A: '*it was like a pied piper'* said one onlooker *'two musicians, playing ancient instruments, in the lead followed by diaphanous models floating between sculptors, followed by enthusiastic patrons'*. (see previous page)

More recently Patricia and Charles became involved with Opera at Holland Park contributing designs and costumes for *The Pearl Fishers, Norma and Iris* (see previous page). Sandy Powell also bought a collection of their designs to use for the film ***The Wings of the Dove*** which became the basis for costumes which resulted in her nomination for an Oscar. (see back cover for illustration). On another occasion, models in gowns designed by Patricia provided an important artistic back-drop for a childrens' charity exhibition at Christies where jewellery supplied by the Duke of Westminster was on display.

It now seems quite reasonable to describe a fashion design in a similar way to any other artistic production. For example, a dress and jacket (see opposite) were commissioned specially for Bergdorf Goodman (New York) to adorn their internationally famous Christmas windows. The dress fabric was initially hand painted in layers of colour to add dimension to the cloth before texture is created. Because of the unique nature of the very fine hand pleated silk, it was not possible to use conventional dress-making techniques. Such garments are sculpted on the body and the intricate stitching gives the garment shape while allowing for flexibility given the wearer's contours and size. The fabric of the jacket was first hand painted and then printed with acid which destroys the base of the velvet leaving behind the silk chiffon pattern. The design entitled ***Reflection*** was inspired by the patterns reflected in the windows of New York skyscrapers.

Also, just as pictures and other artistic works can be returned to specialists for cleaning and repair so creations of silk and velvet can come back for repair and refreshment. For example, a garment that had been badly dam-

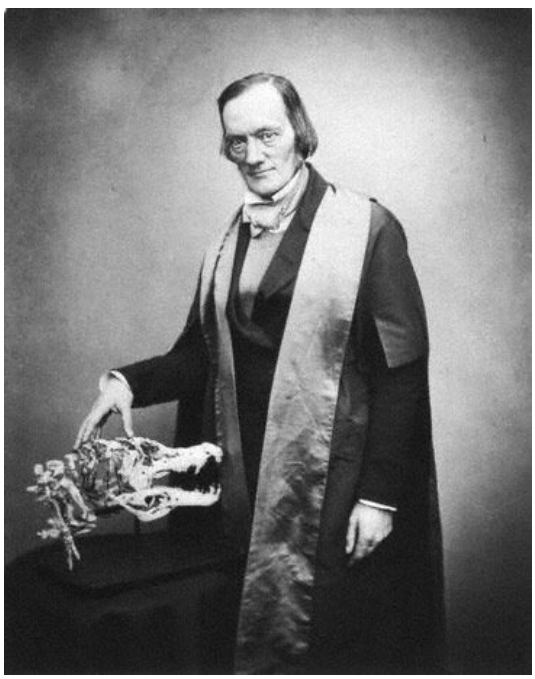
aged since its purchase over 25 years ago, was recently returned to be cleaned and restored to pristine condition.

The studio and work rooms that have replaced much of the workhouse now form an area of sustainable activities, particularly as others see what can be done in unlikely places. The contrast between then and now with regard to work environment and productivity would be unbelievable to those in the original workhouse: from a cold and controlling atmosphere to one that is warm, friendly and colourful; rewarding ideas and skill development, rather than punishing inactivity or family contact; the development of marketable artistic skills such as embroidery and design rather than the tedium of boring and largely useless labour; not to mention the freedom to suggest ideas for expansion or improvement! I am pretty sure that no occupant of the original workhouse could ever have imagined that it would become a place where work activity could be freely and happily enjoyed with opportunities to acquire both artistic and business expertise and where the proceeds can make a contribution to art in Wales.

The fossil turtle at National Museum Cardiff, (also shown is a 10p piece for comparison)

FOSSIL TURTLE REDISCOVERED AFTER 150 YEARS

In 1842 the famous naturalist and palaeontologist Sir Richard Owen described four new fossil turtle specimens from the Purbeck Limestone (Lower Cretaceous) of Dorset. One of these has always been in The Natural History Museum in London, but the other three were held in private collections, and after 1842, effectively vanished for 150 years!



Sir Richard Owen (1804-1892), founding father of the Natural History Museum, London, (Maull & Polyblank albumen print, 20cm x 15cm, c1855)

One of the missing three was discovered in the Natural History Museum several years ago by Dr Andrew Milner whilst studying turtles and other reptiles, but the whereabouts of the other two remained a mystery. However, further research led him to the National Museum Cardiff, where a fossil turtle in the collections was positively identified as one of Owen's missing specimens.

This fossil turtle, originally named *Chelone obovata*, was owned by Joseph Chaning Pearce (1811-1847), who worked as a doctor in Bath until his early death at the age of 37. He built up one of the largest private collections of fossils outside London and had set aside part of his house as a private museum. After his death his family kept the small museum until at least 1886 when they moved to Kent. The collection is next heard of in 1915, when much of it was bought by the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, along with its original catalogue. Dr Milner searched the collections at Bristol Museum but did not find the Chaning Pierce specimen, and assumed that it was destroyed in 1940 when incendiary bombs landed on the exhibition hall of the Bristol Museum during the Second World War. However, in 2008 he found the original hand-written catalogue, and on page 32 is the record for Fossil no.12 *Chelone obovata* with a pencil annotation, "*Sent to Cardiff Museum, 3rd March 1933*".

Dr Milner contacted the Department of Geology, National Museum Cardiff, and it transpired that in 1933 a Purbeck turtle shell was registered, although we had very little information about it. The specimen had been on display in the Evolution of Wales exhibition since 1993 as it is very well preserved and fairly complete. Richard Owen's original description in 1842 describes this turtle as the 'type specimen' of the species *Chelone obovata,* meaning that this

is the specimen against which all others should be checked. Although there were no illustrations, he published a very detailed and accurate description. This description matches the specimen in National Museum Cardiff exactly, and there is no doubt that it is the same specimen.

A recent investigation shows that the turtle now belongs in the genus *Hylaeochelys* and the species *latiscutata*. This specimen has significant historical interest as it was collected prior to 1840, and described by Sir Richard Owen, the man who invented the name 'dinosaur'.

The details of the rediscovery have been published in ***Morphology and Evolution in Turtles***, edited by D. B. Brinkman *et al.*, in the series, ***Vertebrate Paleobiology and Paleoanthropology***.

Cindy Howells

Cindy Howells is Collections Manager in the Palaeontology Department

ALSACE-LORRAINE AND THE BLACK FOREST: AUTUMN 2012

Alsace-Lorraine was once described by Louis XIV as a "*beautiful garden*", a description still appropriate today. It is a lovely area of pretty pastel villages, historic towns and of deep valleys and green hills. Though linked together geographically they are in fact two different regions, Alsace being more Germanic while Lorraine is more overtly French in character.

We left Cardiff early on a fine September morning and after spending a night in Brussels we travelled onwards through Northern France, passing en route some very evocative road signs, such as Verdun and the Maginot Line, which stirred memories of the dreadful events which took place on these lands during World War I. There was a stop at the university town of Metz where we admired the varied architecture with its Roman, medieval and German influences and toured the great cathedral which contains some lovely stained glass. Amongst the medieval and renaissance windows can be seen the work of Marc Chagall whose use of blue, red, yellow and violet created in the sunlight jewel-like patterns on the grey stones of the cathedral. Our overnight destination was the charming small town of Obernai. This attractive medieval town with its narrow streets, gabled houses and old shop signs is still partly surrounded by 12th century walls and proved to be an ideal base for the first part of the tour.

The many contrasts on this holiday were well illustrated by visits to two very different museums. We went first to the Alsace Moselle Memorial Museum which was opened in 2011 and is situated within a hillside of the Vosges valley. From the terrace it was possible to look across the valley and see the memorial known as The Flame which marks the site of Struthof, France's only concentration camp. The close proximity of Alsace to its German neighbour, which has made for a history of bitter conflict, occupation and annexation, was well illustrated in the Museum. During the 20th century Alsace has been governed in turn by France and Germany and has endured no less than five forced changes of nationality, resulting in frequent population displacement and years of unrest. This tragic history was brought vividly to life by realistic sound and light effects creating the terror of the bombings and the chaos of war.

Temple Neuf, a Protestant church in Metz built 1901-5 during the German annexation

A complete contrast came at the Lalique Museum which was also opened in 2011. Here elegant displays of glassware and strikingly original jewellery in the Art Deco style illustrated the inspired creations of the Lalique family. The jewellery is particularly exquisite with designs of flowers, animals and birds and was much sought after by celebrities of the early 20th century. The family no longer own the company but the local factory continues to produce the glassware.

As expected, Strasbourg proved to be one of the highlights of our holiday. The historic centre surrounds a graceful cathedral built of local delicately pierced sandstone whose soft golden colour changed at sunset to an enchanting rose hue. Within the cathedral is a renowned astrological clock and many fine

The Koifhus (Old Custom House), Colmar built 1480

statues. The town has a lively cosmopolitan atmosphere and a definite 'buzz' due in part, no doubt, to its lively university scene. This older part of the city was in sharp contrast to the modern sector which houses the whole European Parliament for just one week each month. We were taken into the Debating Chamber, familiar to all from TV news broadcasts. It was no surprise to find that the subject of the debate in progress was the financial crisis and the status of the Euro. Each seat in the gallery is fitted with instantaneous translation headphones so it was possible to follow the debate in detail. This was followed by a private Q&A session for our group with Welsh MEP Dr Kaye Swinburne. We listened with interest to her views on the European Parliament and its importance for Wales.

One of the loveliest places we visited was Colmar, a beautifully preserved medieval town. It was delightful to wander around its narrow streets lined with brightly painted houses, interesting old shops and stone bridges. As in all the locations we saw throughout the holiday we were impressed by the lovely floral displays that decorated the bridges and tumbled in a riot of colour from balconies and windows. Colmar is home to the Unterlinden Museum which contains many fine paintings, the highlight of which is the Isenheim Altarpiece by Matthew Grunewald. In this masterpiece the Crucifixion is depicted in extraordinary and harrowing detail. It was a strange and moving experience to stand in front of this painting of intense suffering.

The latter part of our tour was spent in the Black Forest region of Germany with a day in Freiburg en route. This fine old town was first established in 1120 and is notable for its channels carrying fast flowing water which have been running along the streets since the Middle Ages draining excess surface waters and providing the water needed to extinguish the frequent fires. These channels required care as it was quite easy to inadvertently step into them and our guide therefore reminded us to look down as well as up during our walk around Freiburg.

From Freiburg the landscape became more dramatic as we travelled up through pine forests to reach the resort at Lake Titisee. From this delightful location we had a short journey to Triberg to see Germany's highest waterfalls. There was also a visit there to the Black Forest Museum containing much of local interest including of course the ubiquitous cuckoo clocks and a fine collection of mechanical musical instruments.

The last night of the tour was spent at Reims, thus ending on an exceptional note. The cathedral here is one of Europe's greatest treasures and although much damaged in WW1 it has been sympathetically restored and its façade is a glory of medieval iconography. Within the cathedral the dazzling stained glass ranges from a 13th century rose window to more of Chagall's vivid modern images. No less than thirty-three kings of France have been crowned in its serene space.

After this came the long journey by coach and ferry back to Cardiff. I think all were agreed that it was a most enjoyable programme with its contrasts of medieval splendour and modern panache and its lighter side from cuckoo clocks to delicious cakes. With the addition of good food and wine taken in friendly company we felt once again that our grateful thanks were due to our inspirational leader Val Courage for another highly successful tour.

Diana Wilson

TWO PAINTINGS OF MARGAM HOUSE ACQUIRED

If you have not already been to see the two pictures of Margam in Gallery 3 you are missing a treat. They were purchased with help from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Art Fund and provide quite different views of the house which was constructed from the remains of the Cistercian abbey of Margam during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It became the largest and most important country house in Glamorgan but was demolished around 1790.

Both were painted by an artist of the British School in a naive style and were inspired by Dutch topographical

British School, ***View of Margam House, Glamorgan looking South***, (Oil on canvas., 112cm x 112cm , c.1700)

paintings and engravings. Though naïve, they are full of incident and detail. They were commissioned by the owner, Sir Edward Mansel, as a record of the house, its garden, park, and surrounding estate. Both paintings comprise a bird-eye view of the house, its service buildings, and gardens in an extensive landscape.

British School***, View of Margam House, Glamorgan, looking North***, (Oil on canvas. 146 x 145cm, c.1700)

The larger painting shows a view of Margam House looking south. The many-windowed family rooms are on the left, and the kitchens, stables and service quarters on the right. The ruined chapter house is in the centre with the parish church, another surviving part of the mediaeval monastery, nearby. The house dwarfs the little thatched buildings of Margam village which can be seen in the lower right corner. The house is set in a deer park and surrounded by orchards, and formal gardens. The tower–like building on the left is a banqueting house, built in about 1670. Beyond, a great avenue leads the eye through the adjoining fields to the hamlet of Nottage. In the distance Kenfig sand dunes are lit by a patch of sunlight and them is the Bristol Channel.

The smaller shows the house from the south. At the bottom of the painting, travellers make their way past its gates. An avenue of trees runs up to a second gateway with a formal water garden beyond. When Sir Rice Mansel converted the monks' living quarters into a house in the 1550s he kept the mediaeval gatehouse. Most of the gabled range to the right and the central tower probably date from about 1600. However the Mansel family continued to adapt and improve the house, and the wing on the left had been modernised and extended about thirty years before. People are playing bowls in front of the banqueting house on the upper right whilst deer graze in the park, which also contains walled orchards and farm buildings. The artist has adapted the outline of the three hills in the background so as to frame the house in the landscape.

Diane Davies and Judy Edwards

MAXIMILIAN LENZ: A SECESSIONIST IN CARDIFF

Twenty- twelve was the year Austria celebrated Gustav Klimt's 150th birthday and nobody could forget this event, because shops were full of Klimt memorabilia: scarves, cups, umbrellas, earrings, shopping list covers, bottle openers, key rings and even bed covers displayed one of Klimt's best known paintings of his golden period, ***The Kiss***. The extraordinary attention and interest in the Secession Movement in Vienna made me remember that our Museum has a painting, called ***Spring*** by one of the forty founding members of this Viennese group, Maximilian Lenz.

Lenz was born in Vienna in October 1860, the son of a shoemaker, Vincent Lenz and his wife Anna Theresia. His father, who was very interested in art, recognized and

furthered Maximilian's talent from an early age and sent him to study at the Kunstgewerbeschule (College of Applied Arts) and later to the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, where he met Gustav Klimt and the painters became close friends. Maximilian gained several awards and won several scholarships during his studies. This money enabled him to travel around Italy and continue his studies in Rome for two years. On one of these journeys to Ravenna he was accompanied by Gustav Klimt. The magnificent Byzantine gold mosaics of the court of Justinian and Theodora made a lasting impression on the two artists and influenced both to a great extent.. Klimt used the rich gold and silver background in many of his paintings. Lenz's painting, ***Spring***, however, shows the application of gold not as a background, but in the rich gold colour of Spring's mantel which enhances Lenz's world of daydreaming and adds a symbolic dignity to the work.

The painting shows the allegorical figure of Spring elegantly positioned on a raised stone bench under a huge low growing tree with flowering branches. She is wearing a flowing dress and a crown like hat. A horizontally spreading richly gilded cloak covers the whole width of the picture and a host of golden butterflies is approaching from the left. She is accompanied by a peacock, the symbol of immortality and renewal. The figure is evidently swaying to some ethereal music and ready to dance. On the left side is a couple in contemporary clothes sitting in the shade of some low growing trees, they are secretly watching four dancing spirits. Neither the couple nor the figure of Spring are aware of the other's presence; they are in a world of their own. The depiction of harmony between reality and aesthetic rapture is one of Maximilian Lenz's great achievements. The format of the oil painting (174cm by 366cm) suggests that it might have been intended for an architectural setting in one of the new palaces on the Ringstrasse in Vienna.

The best known painting by Maximilian Lenz, ***One World***, expresses the philosophy of this Symbolist painter extremely well. The contemporary Viennese press reported that, "*A blue picture was an astonishing success in the exhibition and, moreover, it was purchased immediately. This is the painting of Maximilian Lenz, who became famous overnight*". This painting incorporated a full length realistic self portrait of Lenz, who is strolling through a blossoming spring landscape. Yet he seems completely unaware of the ethereal spirits approaching him. What does the painter want to show us? There are many interpretations possible and this is probably the attraction of this painting. The picture was acquired by the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest in 1998 and is one of their greatly treasured exhibits.

Art in the 1880s mirrored the tensions and confused state of society and politics in the Austro-Hungarian Empire at that time. The false prudishness of the wealthy middle class had calcified art and the power snatched from the aristocratic elite had shifted to the money-making bankers and industrialists who became the new patrons of art and whose taste was very different. Many artists decided to ignore the rules of classical and historic painting they had been trained in and founded a breakaway movement, the Secession Movement. Klimt became its first elected president. The secessionists went to great lengths to invite artists from all over Europe to exhibit in Vienna and join them in their search for new styles. An important influence came from an unexpected encounter: Charles Rennie Mackintosh and his group, The Glasgow Four, were invited to show their work at the 8th exhibition of the Viennese Secession and the designs of Charles Rennie Mackintosh had an astonishing influence on Klimt and the Secession Movement.

As mentioned previously Lenz was a founding member of the Secession and he was a contributor to ***Ver Sacrum***, the official magazine of the Vienna Secession movement, which featured drawings in their favoured style, the Jugendstil. For the first edition Maximilian Lenz produced a lithograph called "Frühlingstreiben" (frolicking in spring).

In the magazine's first edition published in 1898 the name Secession is explained: whenever in ancient Rome controversies arose and reached a certain stalemate, the Roman citizens moved onto one of the seven hills around Rome and threatened they would found a second Rome in full view of the ancient city. That was called the "*secessio plebis*". In the same way this group of artists wished to show that they wanted to sever all old ties, not for any economic gains or to beat competition, but to break free from the calcification of art that pervaded the present scene in Vienna. They hoped to create a dynamic, youthful style (Jugendstil), a new modern art form, to initiate a sacred spring in art.

In 1886 Lenz seemed to have received an invitation to go to Buenos Aires in Argentina to design banknotes and postage stamps. He also worked for ***El Sudamericano***, a revolutionary magazine, which influenced him considerably. From that time onwards his work became more realistic. He worked mainly as a lithographer and during the first world war he designed posters for the Central Powers.

He left Vienna in 1904 and accepted the position of a drawing instructor with the well-known family Kupelwieser in Lower Austria. One of their daughters, Ida Kupelwieser, was a very gifted artist and at the age of 66 Maximilian Lenz married her. Sadly Ida died only 4 months after the marriage. Maximilian continued to live on the family's estate until his death in 1948.

A "One World" Coffee Mug

Just as Klimt's paintings were later commercially reproduced, we find Lenz's painting entitled "One World" depicted on cups, dishes, vases and umbrellas. The rich and striking colours as well as the sumptuous gold and silver settings are certainly thought to embellish and enhance many of our everyday objects. I would like to leave you with one question: is this an appropriate use of fine art?

Ilse Fisher-Hayes

Editors' note

Unfortunately Amgueddfa Cymru does not own the copyright for reproduction of "Spring", and so we are unable to publish it at present whilst we negotiate with the copyright owners.

At the moment the picture is not on display. We note that the website has three requests from members of the public for it to be on view to the public again. We would heartily endorse those requests.

POETRY CORNER

Sonnet for Elizabeth Fritsch

Turning clay back to stone
you invite us into the sky of dreams

and the architecture of particles
as they dance and collide.

Blocks/books, ghost boat;
fugues and fireworks painted on fired work.

The building blocks of where we might be
float through the blue to locate us.

The flattened arabesque.
Impossible cup and saucer.

Counterpoint /curve/clash:
ziggurat/drifter/cloud chamber.

Jazz poems in air: shared visions
in two and a half dimensions.

Tony Curtis

Editors' note

Tony Curtis is Emeritus Professor of Poetry at the University of Glamorgan. He is the author of several collections of poetry, including ***War Voices*** (1995); ***The Arches*** (1998);•***Heaven's Gate*** (2001) and ***Crossing Over*** (2007), all published by Seren.

MUSEUM NEWS

In November Teresa Margolles was chosen by the international panel of judges as winner of the 5th Artes Mudi prize of £40,000, the largest art prize in the UK. A short-list of seven had been selected from 750 nominations which included artists from Sweden, Cuba, India and Scotland. In both Margelles works for Artes Munde, death is a major theme, reflecting the social experiences of northern Mexicans where drug related crime has resulted in widespread violence and murder. Since graduating with a diploma in forensic medicine, she has examined the economics of death and her work often brings the physical reality and materiality of death to the fore. This was exemplified in her artistic intervention during the Venice Biennale in which the floor of the Mexican pavilion was mopped with water used to wash the bodies of the dead in a Mexican morgue. New to this year's competition has been the opportunity for the public to vote for their favourite exhibit. Did you see whether or not public opinion agreed with the international panel of judges?

Amgueddfa Cymru continues with its poverty strategy which aims to help transform the lives of children by opening up ways to engage children and families in a variety of informal learning activities, cultural in origin and planned with reference to results of a number of pilot projects. If one can gage success from participant observations then the voice of one participant saying, "*Museums are not just for Geeks then",* suggests that the work of Museum staff such as Eleri Evans and colleagues, is making an impact! It is virtually impossible to be in the Museum these days without seeing children enjoying a visit. In fact the Museum has been so successful in engaging the interests of children in a range of activities that they are now running the risk of children 'skipping' school to return to the Museum on their own! A truly unusual measure of success!

Two new appointments of interest to Friends include Janice Lane, now the new Director of Education responsible for Learning, Exhibitions and Media and Sian Cook, from the British Heart Foundation, now the new Director of Development.

The National Roman Legion Museum provided a family event in December to show visitors how Christmas is celebrated around the world and this month there has been another opportunity for youngsters to 'join' the Roman Army and sample life as a Roman soldier.

If you have not made a recent visit to St Fagans, you should try to find the time to go and see the latest historic building, a Tudor trader's house from Haverfordwest Pembrokeshire, donated by Carol Nargrove. The original location of this late medieval house near the old quay, suggests it might have been the home of a trader, so it was decided to refurbish and interpret the building as it might have appeared around 1550 when a wide range of goods was being traded to and from South Wales to the western

corners of England as well as to parts of Europe and to Newfoundland.

Recent Additions to the Library

Some recent acquisitions of the Library include several volumes of published accounts of tours around Wales made in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, as well as one or two really interesting unpublished accounts. These include one with the addition of watercolours and another with pen and ink drawings which include one of a local guide Richard Pugh who took the party up Cader Idris wearing very rough garments and sporting a goat's skull on his head! The view of his cottage shows a small building constructed with roughly shaped boulders and a roof of vegetation. We are very grateful to John Kenyon (Librarian) for making the picture below available to us.

Researching the Museum's Geological Map Collection

A particular strength of the Museum's Geology department is its collection of maps, largely the work of the first Keeper Frederick North (1889-1968). The collection includes fine examples of early topographical maps of Wales as well as a world class set of early geological maps. Among these are the maps of the pioneer geological surveyor, William Smith (1769-1839), who produced the first true geological map of any country in 1815. This map measuring 260cm by 198cm is very rare and much sought after by collectors. It is also the map which resulted in the 2001 best-seller by Simon Winchester, ***The Map that Changed the World***. Only about 100 of the original 350 copies seem to have survived and a good quality copy sells for tens of thousands of pounds! Amgueddfa Cymru is very fortunate to have nine of the surviving copies of this map.

Each of the copies were numbered by North himself with one numbered 52 being in a very poor state with both scorch marks and scissors appearing to be the cause of considerable damage. It was only during 2012 that Tom Sharpe unravelled the puzzle of the damage when he was sorting through the papers of Douglas Bassett (1927-2009), a former Director and Keeper, who had been preparing a biography of North whom he succeeded in 1959. Among the papers, Tom came across a folded yellow card inscribed with "*Christmas Greetings for 1944*" in North's distinctive handwriting. Opening this home-made Christmas card revealed part of a geological map of the Lake District which had clearly been cut out from one of the rare and valuable William Smith maps! A stuck-on typewritten note explained that it was one of the few fragments of a Smith map that had been rescued from a bonfire started by someone who had no idea about the value of old maps.

Talks and Tours at National Museum Cardiff

The Museum organises regular lunchtime talks on Art at 1:05pm on a Friday and the occasional tour on a Tuesday at 1;05pm. Just make it known to the Reception desk that

A page from Eliza Rand's Diary showing her drawing of Richard Pugh and his cottage Photo: Jennifer Evans

you are interested in attending. To whet your appetite, here are the talks for March and the beginning of April:

Friday 8th March: "Don't Look Now", the cleaning and restoration of Canaletto's ***Fondazione Giorgio, Venice*** - Adam Webster, Chief Conservator.

Friday 15th March: Margam House in 1700, a lost Welsh mansion - Oliver Fairclough, Keeper of Art.

Friday 22nd March: From Medieval Monastery to Country House: The Evidence of Two Late Seventeenth-Century Pictures of Margam Abbey - Dr David Robinson.

Friday 12th April: An introduction to the new collections-based displays of Pop and Abstract Art - Nicholas Thornton, Head of Modern and Contemporary Art.

Friday 19th April: Pop and Abstract: A gallery talk - Dr Ceri Thomas

Judy Edwards

FRIENDS' NEWS

Nothing like starting a New Year remembering some of the good things from the previous one and planning to take up some of the opportunities for an interesting holiday or day out with 'Friends' in 2013. We certainly had a very successful lecture programme last year and some very good times on trips abroad and in the UK, not to mention a new venture to see a Shakespeare play at Stratford - something we hope to be repeating in the autumn of this year.

The AGM ran smoothly and we much appreciated the willingness of our Museum's Director, David Anderson, Deputy Director, Mark Richards, and the Chairman of the Governors, Elizabeth Elias, to find time to attend, particularly since the Director had only just returned from a visit to Japan.

Our year ended again with a Christmas lunch at St Fagans where we were again joined by David Anderson and Mark Richards whose support we particularly appreciated. We were entertained royally by the Oriana Choir who provided a very entertaining selection of traditional and unusual Christmas carols, verses and stories, much enjoyed by everyone.

The Friends' committee has now completed discussion and planning with NMW to produce a new Friends' Leaflet for those interested in finding out more about membership, with both colour and picture changes.

You will have seen from the 2013 programme of events that Val Courage plans a trip to Scotland for the first time and included in the programme will be meeting with 'Friends' of local Museums. Here in Cardiff your committee got together to 'meet and greet' the Friends of Exeter and of Birmingham Museums when they came to Amgueddfa Cymru towards the end of last year. There is no doubt that they enjoyed the Tours organised for them and we appreciate the time and effort that people like Anne Saer (our overworked secretary) give to ensure that visitors see and hear about the best of our travelling and static exhibitions.

New members

We are pleased to report that membership numbers continued to increase during the past year. The increase in membership is thanks largely to the efforts of existing members to introduce their friends to the organisation. In addition, where Friends have signed Gift Aid declarations, this has also increased our resources by significant amounts; for the last two financial years it was £4153. The willingness of Friends to sign the Gift Aid declaration is vitally important as it allows us to increase the support we offer to the Museum. However, we will need to see what the effect of a modest increase in fees in March 2013 will be and how much of an effect the prolonged recession will have. I am sure we are not the first to be talking about learning to live with continuous change. However, at least at our Museum the changes have all been marvellous as you will see in the Museum News.

Judy Edwards

BAfM NEWS

In the autumn edition of the BAfM Journal (British Association of Friends of Museums) it was reported that Caerphilly County Borough Council had been given the green light by the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop plans to open up more of Llancaiach Fawr Manor to the public. Its origins go back to the mid-16th century and it has been open to the public since 1991 with the manor's story being presented through live interpretation.

The Journal also reminds us that the BAfM Annual Conference next year will be held in Swansea at the Egypt Centre where there is an award-winning volunteer scheme. On Saturdays, for example, galleries are manned by children, alongside permanent staff. Most of the items at the Centre were collected by the manufacturing pharmacist Sir Henry Wellcome and when he died in 1936 the collection was housed at University College London. Early in the 1970s part of that collection was moved to Swansea University where a small museum was set up in the Classics and Ancient History Department. In order to make the collection more accessible to the public, grants were sought and sufficient funds were obtained to build the Egypt Centre which now houses the largest collection of Egyptian antiquities in Wales and is supported by its own 'Friends'.

Judy Edwards