

Friends' Newsletter and Magazine

October 2013

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A MESSAGE TO OUR READERS

We want to begin this message with a couple of general announcements.

You may well be receiving this October edition somewhat earlier than usual. The reason is linked to a reduction in the number of *What's On* which will be issued by Am-gueddfa Cymru from now on. There will be just two which will go out in March and September. The publication of the Newsletter is tied to *What's On* because the Museum pays the Friends postage costs when Friends' material goes out together with *What's On*. As you can appreciate this is of considerable financial benefit for the Friends as whole, allowing us to spend more on our charitable aims. So we are changing as well and, from 2014 on, you will be receiving just two editions a year, in March and September. In compensation we are planning to increase the number of pages and our target is thirty-two per edition.

We have had a letter from one of our readers questioning the appearance of two articles in Welsh in the last edition of the Newsletter. • We would like to respond by making some general comments. One of the important aims of the Friends is to support the educational work of the Museum. • As editors of the Newsletter and Magazine we try to play our part in that aspect by including articles concerned with Welsh culture and heritage. • The Welsh language is an important aspect of Wales' heritage and its present culture and we seek to reflect that in the magazine. • Financial implications mean that we cannot produce a fully bilingual newsletter but the acceptance of either language without distinction remains a prime goal and to that end we welcome articles in either Welsh or English with the choice of language left to the individual author. • We are aware, however, that the majority of our readers have English as their first language and so we have introduced the idea of a summary of articles in Welsh in the hope that it might entice readers to engage more with Wales's first language.

So on to the particulars of this edition. We have two main articles. One is on the travels in Wales of Michael Faraday, the famous nineteenth century scientist. He visited not just areas that would have excited his scientific curiosity such as the new iron and copper works in the South but also places on the tourist route such as the mountains of Snowdonia. The second article stems from a Friends coach trip to St Mary's Church Lydiard, Tregozze and traces the connection between it and Fonmon Castle in the Vale of Glamorgan through the Bolingbroke family (of Shakespeare fame).

Many of the other items have an artistic theme. The Museum was recently pleased to receive a major bequest of modern art from Eric and Jean Cass and we have an item on the collection amassed by them and the works that

have been donated to the Museum as well as an illustration of perhaps the most important work in the bequest. A second article looks at the background to the life and work of the Welsh artist and writer David Jones. The Museum recently held an exhibition of his works and we are very pleased to be allowed to illustrate the article with one of the stunning watercolours from the exhibition. A third item is on the drawings of Falcon Hildred who for over fifty years has been recording the disappearing building and industrial landscape of Britain; it coincides with an exhibition of his work at the National Slate Museum which focuses on his drawing of the slate industry around Blaenau Ffestiniog. Finally on this artistic theme there is a short item on the two images that we have chosen for the front and back covers. Both are from the Museums collections, one recently acquired and the other presently on loan to Oriol y Parc, Pembrokeshire for their current exhibition.

Then for those interested in other areas of the Museum's collections and work we have an item on a remarkable trilobite fossil in the Museum collection. Remarkable because it was fossilised in mud containing pyrite (Fools Gold) so its intricate details look as if they are highlighted in gold.

Of course there are our regular items including news of what is happening at the Museum, with the Friends and within BAfM. Plus, this time, we also have a book review of an about-to-be published novel with eighteenth century Pentryrch as its setting.

None of this material could be put together without the help of Museum staff. We would particularly like to thank Graham Davies for providing material from the *Rhagor* website and Bryony Dawkes, Kay Kays, Clare Smith, Charlotte Topsfield and Julie Williams for their help in sourcing for many of the illustrations in this edition and, just as importantly, getting the necessary permission to enable us to use them.

Diane Davies and Judy Edwards



FROM THE CHAIRMAN

It is pleasing to learn that the number of people visiting our museums continues to rise. A record 1.75m visits were recorded in 2012/13, 9% above target. John Griffiths, Minister for Culture and Sport, congratulated Am-gueddfa Cymru on the "fantastic" figures achieved, adding that the policy of free entry continued to allow visitors to enjoy the country's rich heritage - incidentally, a reassuring confirmation that the Welsh Government remains committed to the free entry concept.

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Back cover: Sir Hubert Herkomer, *Hwfa Môn, Archdruid of Wales* (Pencil and watercolour, 59cm x 37cm, 1896)

Next Edition

Contributions for inclusion in the March 2014 edition should be submitted by the beginning of January 2014.

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

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The last edition of the Newsletter and Magazine included details of the Friends' financial support for the National Museum. In terms of the Museum's total turnover our own contribution is naturally relatively small. That said, there is a little recognised way in which the Friends are able to assist to a degree quite disproportionate to the actual amount of money involved. This can arise when a potential funder stipulates that backing will be made available, but conditional upon part of the total cash requirement being provided by a third party. This might typically be in the order of 10%, a sum easily within our capability. This gearing effect thus in a sense magnifies the value of our support and the Museum is well aware that any request of this nature will be likely to receive the Friends' favourable consideration. Somewhat similarly the Friends pledge to contribute £50,000 spread over a period of years has helped to facilitate the major support provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund for the redevelopment of the National History Museum at St Fagans.

A friend lent me the 22nd December 1949 edition of the long-forgotten magazine *News Review*, the other day. I quote from an article therein:

"Weather experts consider that the recent prevalence of hot dry summers was no mere chance and believe that Europe's climate is becoming more like that of North America which has a more rigidly governed system of wet, dry, hot and cold spells. Though pleasing to holidaymakers, the trend is unwelcome to civil engineers, whose reservoirs have always depended on a round-the-year supply of water."

While the summer months this year did see more sunny days than of late, the reference to the prevalence of long hot summers might justify a hollow laugh. As Lord Salisbury once memorably wrote *"No lesson seems to be so deeply inculcated by the experience of life as that you should never trust experts."* Perhaps he had a point.

Roger Gagg

MICHAEL FARADAY IN WALES

Michael Spencer



Portrait of Michael Faraday (1791-1867) in his late thirties. Engraving by John Cochran (1821-1865) from a painting by Henry Pickersgill (1782-1875) (Image courtesy of Wikipedia)

Michael Faraday was arguably Britain's greatest physical scientist. His greatness lay not as did, for example, that of Darwin in one major discovery but in the broad range of sciences to which he made major contributions, showing remarkable insight. His discoveries led to many applications, e.g. the dynamo and electric motor. Remarkably, he came from a poor family and received a minimum of education. All his working life was at the Royal Institution in London, first under Humphrey Davy, a great scientist in his own right, then as Director.

Many eminent scientists, and eminent members of other professions, are not really pleasant people, largely we must assume as a result of a driving ambition to succeed. Faraday showed none of this: he put his religious beliefs into practice and was always pleasant, whether to a Welsh-speaking girl in the Vale of Neath, the Prime Minister or his own family. On occasion he could make a sharp remark but this was never cruel or insulting. Sir Robert Peel, the Prime Minister, visited Faraday in the Royal Institution

soon after the invention of the dynamo. Pointing to this odd machine, he inquired what use it was. Faraday is said to have replied, "I know not, but I wager that one day your government will tax it."

Faraday, despite the intensity of his work at the Royal Institution, travelled frequently. It is little known that he made three visits to Wales, in 1819, 1821 and 1848. The first was the most important, ranging from Swansea to Anglesey, and we are fortunate that Faraday's journal of the tour was published by Dafydd Tomos in 1972. It was not intended by Faraday for publication, only as a record of the journey for Faraday himself, for he had, surprising as it may seem, a poor memory.

The stimulus for the journey was an invitation by J. J. Guest, one of the iron masters of Dowlais. Faraday, who always enjoyed visiting factories and workshops, accepted eagerly. He believed, to use a phrase of George Porter (a Director of the Royal Institution in the twentieth century), that there was not a distinction between pure and applied science, only one between "applied science and yet-to-be-applied science". Further, Faraday took advantage of the visit to tour Wales with his friend Edwin Magrath. In three weeks they travelled very widely, remarkable when considering transport limitations. To start they went by coach from London to Cardiff: "Cardiff is a considerable port for coal and iron. All the iron from Merthyr, Dowlais and that neighbourhood is brought to this port, there being both a canal and a tramway from those places to the harbour." The following day they took a post-chaise to Merthyr.

"On approaching Merthyr, the great change upon the surface of the earth, indicated extensive works beneath. Tramways ran in every direction, and every now and then a range of thirty or forty trams laden with coal, or ore, or limestone, illustrated the advantage of this mode of conveyance. On all sides, were piled up large mountains of slag, cinder, or refuse; or sometimes of valuable materials or products, as coal Ironstone and Iron. Men, black as gnomes, were moving in all directions, taking to and bringing from the furnaces, and works;



Michael Faraday in his laboratory, c1850s by artist Harriet Jane Moore who documented Faraday's life in watercolours. (Image courtesy of Wikipedia)



George Childs, **Dowlais Ironworks** (Watercolour over pencil on paper, 24cm x 35cm, 1840)

and as we came into sight of these erections, flame upon flame appeared rising over the country and scorching the air."

"I was much amused by observing the effect the immensity of the works had on me. The operations were all simple enough, but from their extensive nature, the noise which accompanied them, the heat, the vibration, the hum of men, the hiss of engines, the clatter of shears, the fall of masses, I was so puzzled, I could not comprehend them, except very imperfectly. The mind was drawn to observe effects, rather for their novelty than their importance; and it was only when by going round two or three times I could neglect to listen to sounds at first strange, or to look at rapid motions, that I could readily trace the process through its essential parts, and compare, easily and quickly, one part with another."

All aspects of the works caught Faraday's attention:

"We then walked to the works. I was much amused on our way there with the various applications made to Mr Guest by the men and inhabitants. Some wanted redress; some craved assistance; some begged for employment. It is a practice with Mr. Guest to induce the men to save from their wages, what will enable them to build a house. A bit of land is given them to clear for a garden if they choose, and for the trouble of clearing it they are to have it rent free for two or three years. Long low leases are granted them of other spots and then, when a workman has saved a few pounds, he builds himself a little house and settles."

Faraday's interests went well beyond science and industry, and his journal is full of descriptions of the people and countryside that he and Magrath found. After the visit to Merthyr they were keen to see the waterfalls of the Vale of Neath. These were famous, having been written about and

Painted since the 17th century. But Faraday's account (too long to be given in full) is as much about his guide, who seems to have bewitched him, as the waterfalls.

"After dinner I set off on a ramble ... the canal path very dirty, the canal overflowing in many places from the rain and the river very turbid and swelled. ... I soon rambled my way out to the village of Melincourt. Here I got a little damsel for my guide who could not speak a word of English. We however talked together all the way to the fall though neither knew what the other said. I fancy it is not often she is elevated to the rank of guide for she seemed proud of her office and was extremely solicitous to fill it with honour. She carefully pointed out the dirty and clean places and ran so fast in her spirit of readiness as to leave me far behind. I was delighted with her burst of pleasure ... she placed me on a safe stone [to see the waterfall] and then throwing her arms towards the torrent, chatted most volubly in Welsh I suppose about its beauties and its force. ... the stream descended freely through the air, the rocks receding from behind it and leaving it to combat with the wind. The body of water was considerable and yet it became so minutely divided in the descent as to seem like a mere film thrown before the cliffs ... my little Welsh damsel was busy running about even under the stream, gathering strawberries ... she gave me a whole handful and would not take one for herself ... On returning from the fall I gave her a shilling ... she curtsied, and I perceived her delight. ... When we returned to the village I bade her good night and she bade me farewell both by her actions and, I have no doubt, her language too."

Faraday was keen to see the copper works at Swansea, so he went there after the visit to Merthyr. Again he describes the process in great detail but there is not space to reproduce this, other than a brief account of an oddity:



William Henry Bartlett, **From the Top of Cader Idris** (Mixed media on paper, 21cm x 32cm, c1840)

“There is another part of the art of copper making which is somewhat curious; namely, the preparation of Japanese copper. The Chinese, to whom a large quantity of copper is sent from England by the East India Company, prefer the Japan copper to all other for its fine red colour, etc., and this is very successfully imitated here. The copper is cast into small ingots ... The moulds for these ingots are fixed in a frame ... a trough is elevated on one side of the frame with boles opposite the moulds and little sliding valves before them to shut the apertures. The trough is filled and supplied with water ... The unpolled melted copper, high and dry, is cast in these moulds in the water; ... Cast in this way, the ingots assume a very brilliant red colour and are sold to the Chinese as Japan copper.”

On his way north to Anglesey he took time to ascend both Cader Idris and Snowdon. He writes much more about the climb up Cader Idris.

“The road wound in a very amusing manner into the mountain generally following the course of a fine blue stream ... In one place where the scenery was very wild and romantic a river being on our left at the bottom of a deep woody dell, high hills on our right and Cader Idris before us, we were suddenly arrested by melody, and stopped to enjoy sounds which added inexpressible interest to the scene. ... children were chanting a Welsh psalm. I never heard sounds that charmed me as these did. ... As the mountains developed themselves before us we saw more and more distinctly the nature of the spot we were going to and a task we should have in crossing the mountain. ... thunder had gradually become more and more powerful ... and now rain descended. The storm had commenced at the western extremity of the valley and rising up Cader Idris traversed it in its length and then passing over rapidly to the south east deluged the hills with rain ... The water descended in torrents from the very tops of the highest hills ... a river which ran behind the house into the lake below rose momentarily overflowed its banks and extended many yards over the meadows. ... The scene altogether was a very magnificent one ... The wind rose in all directions and I observed here as had often been

observed elsewhere that the track of the storm seemed quite independent of it.”

Faraday describes in graphic detail the problems he and Magrath had in the ascent, for they did not have a guide, only a rough sketch map drawn by an innkeeper. They were not helped by the rain and clouds. They came across a lake. *“The waters are of a fine blue tint and so was the stream that expired from it into the valley beneath.”* After many difficulties, *“We rambled along the northern edge of the mountain in an eastern direction for some time now and then making vain efforts to descend and being forced with much danger to ascend again. ... At last we gained a lower ground and then had to make our way over more easy spots.”*

The ascent of Snowdon appears to have been much less trouble, although *“Magrath would not go with us ... The weather was very fine on the plain and in the valleys but cloudy in the hills and we found very unfortunately that above all was hidden except about 20 yards before us. ... It is not so difficult to ascend as Cader Idris but the path is less certain in its track. When on the mountain we got very partial but magnificent views of clouds and land but no general view of the country. We soon descended and made the best of our way to Caernarvon.”*

Occasionally Faraday’s descriptions seem somewhat eccentric but obviously genuine reactions. He travelled to Anglesey primarily to see the copper mines and factories at Amlwch, where the ore was extracted and processed to copper metal. He deals with this at some length, comparing the processing with what he had seen at Swansea.

“... the refineries. These consisted of a row of reverberatories exactly similar to those used at the Swansea works in which the metal is roasted over and over again. The ore does not come in a crude state to them but is first roasted up at the mountains in kilns by which a

great part of the sulphur is separated and then it comes to these works. ... The refineries afford a pleasant walk perfectly free from the strong smell of sulphurous acid and so abundant at Swansea and very airy."

His first views of Anglesey promoted an odd comparison. "This island [i.e., Anglesey] differs very much in appearance from the other parts of Wales. It is more cultivated and peopled and a much larger number of habitations are sprinkled about it. There is a sort of English air over the place and to a Londoner this seems more than the case from the comparative flatness of the country and as there is, or at least there was, a continual mist throughout the day hanging over the shores of the island, it hid the sea from our view."

Two hundred years ago Wales was at a critical point of change. The Industrial Revolution was well under way: Merthyr Tydfil, the centre of iron and steel making, had become by far the largest town in Wales. In contrast passenger transport by railway had not yet arrived and much of Wales was as it had been for centuries. The descriptions written by Faraday provide invaluable historical records of these fascinating times.

Further Reading

L. Pearce Williams, *Michael Faraday: A Biography* (1965)

Dafydd Tomos, *Michael Faraday in Wales* (1972)

John Meurig Thomas, *Michael Faraday and the Royal Institution* (1991)



COVER STORIES

The Front Cover

The choice for the front cover is a stunning depiction of a heron taking to the air by Graham Sutherland (1903-1980). To the left of the heron is a lit brazier whose heat rises seemingly effortlessly compared to the the earth-bound exertions of the heron.

It is one of a number of lithographs that he produced on his return to Pembrokeshire in 1967. In all he created a set of twenty-six lithographs focusing on animals: they include real animals including monkeys, bats, eagles and toads but also imaginary ones and they offer a fascinating and strange description of the natural world.

The lithographs form a substantial part of an exhibition called *Tooth and Claw: Sutherland's Bestiaries and other Animals* which runs at Oriol y Parc in St David's until 6th November 2013. The aim of the exhibition is to reflect on the animal world of the Pembrokeshire National Park through artworks, primarily the Sutherland lithographs but also works of other artists such as the sculptor, Barry Flanagan. In addition there are animal specimens, in particular some of intricate glass models of sea creatures produced by Leopold and Rudolf Blaschka which can

normally be seen at the Natural History Gallery at the National Museum Cardiff. The third aspect consists of archaeological finds from local caves.

Oriol y Parc is a unique collaboration between Amgueddfa Cymru and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, which uses the national collections of the Museum to celebrate the landscape of Pembrokeshire.

The Back Cover

The back cover shows a recently acquired portrait of Hwfa Môn, Archdruid of the National Eisteddfod from 1895 until his death in 1905. The imposing figure of Hwfa Môn stands in front of a cromlech in his newly-designed archdruid robes with gold breast plate and gold crown decorated with oak leaves.

Hwfa Môn was the bardic name of Rowland Williams who was born in Trefdreath on Anglesey in 1823 and grew up in Rhostrehwfa (from which he derived his bardic name). He became a congregationalist minister and a poet, winning the Chair three times and the crown once. His poetic work has not stood the test of time. Indeed, in the attributed opinion of R Williams Parry: "*Hwfa Môn oedd y creadur tebycaf i fardd a fagwyd erioed yng Nghymru. Ac yn fardd ar ben hynny na ellir byth ei gael yn euog o ysgrifennu yr un llinell o farddoniaeth*" ("Hwfa Môn was the most bardic creature who ever grew up in Wales. But, despite that, he was a bard who could never be found guilty of writing a single line of poetry").

However, his work as the Archdruid was much more impressive and has stood the test of time. During his period in office he ensured that the Gorsedd became central to the proceedings of the Eisteddfod and, as part of this process, he oversaw the introduction of new regalia such as the sword and horn of plenty, and new costumes all of which have been used ever since. So along with Iolo Morganwg and Cynan, Hwfa Môn is seen as responsible for the creation of the Eisteddfod in its modern form.

The man who designed the sword and the archdruid costume is the man who painted him. Sir Hubert Herkomer (1849-1914) was of German descent and was an important figure in the British (read English) art establishment being knighted by Queen Victoria in 1896. So his connection with Welsh culture might at first sight seem surprising. It may have started with Charles Mansel Lewis of Strady Castle who was one of his patrons. His Welsh connections extended to his wife who was from Ruthin which is where they were married. His artistic interest in Wales grew in the 1880s with visits to the Betws-y-Coed artist's colony, which resulted in paintings of Welsh mythic history and landscape. He also began adjudicating at Eisteddfods and in 1895 met Rowland Williams at the Eisteddfod in Llanelli. It was then that he was commissioned by Hwfa Môn to design the new regalia and costume and presumably to paint him in them.

Diane Davies

FONMON, THE ST JOHN FAMILY AND BOLINGBROKE

Judy Edwards



Triptych in St Mary's Church Lydiard, Tregoze

Some of the Friends may remember a visit to Lydiard House and St Mary's Church Tregoze on the outskirts of Swindon. It had poured with rain for most of the day and at one point paddling became the only way to obtain a cup of tea in the Stable cafe! Having walked through the state rooms of the house and enjoyed a sandwich lunch, we ran through the rain to the church. A knowledgeable volunteer talked about the history of the area and the demise of the village. Lydiard Tregoze is mentioned in the Domesday record as a manor belonging to Alfred of Marlborough a Tenant-in-Chief to William I, an unexpected and additional link with the Normans and Fonmon castle which I will come to below. The parish of Lydiard Tregoze was part of the Kingsbridge Hundred, the focus of village life being the medieval church of St Mary with the nearby Lydiard House being the home of the St John family, Viscounts Bolingbroke for 500 years. Our guide told us that as the village disappeared the small church was left to the care of Lord St John Bolingbroke.

Among many other fascinating things in the church, we were shown an intriguing triptych to the left of the altar comprising a family history. In the short time available I noticed that Fonmon appeared on one of the panels and

planned to explore the connection between the St John family in Swindon and Fonmon Castle in South Wales.

Fonmon Castle is now described as a fortified medieval castle in the Vale of Glamorgan owned by the Boothby family since the Civil War of the 17th century when it was sold by the St John family to pay debts. I would find out the source of the debt later on. Almost all buildings as old as Fonmon will have uncertainties about their origin, construction and occupation. One story I found and rather liked, was that someone who had come over to England with the Normans and travelled into Glamorgan with Fitzhamon around 1090, set up house at Fonmon and there is certainly some evidence of a timber structure prior to the stone building that dates from about 1180. In fact this may well have been the great grandfather of Adam de Port who had given instructions to commence building a castle comprising a single block of around 8 metres by 13 metres placed above a steep ravine with a convenient supply of water below. It is likely that the block would have been surrounded by further stone walls and timber buildings to provide a defensible whole.

I later discovered that a Hugh de Port had come over with the Norman invasion of 1066 and may well have been one of the Twelve Knights of Glamorgan who were given the responsibility of extending the Norman Conquest through Glamorgan. I do not suppose this was undertaken lightly for they had a reputation for being harsh. De Port had clearly been an effective and successful Norman ending up as Lord of Basing (Basingstoke) and holding 53 other manors in Hampshire, 13 in Kent and even more at home in Normandy.

During the early half of the 13th century further additions were made to Fonmon, including a square tower to the south and a round tower adjoining the main block. Eventually the curtain wall joining the north and south ranges was filled in to produce an almost 'U' shape to the castle with a courtyard extending westwards. A substantial tithe barn was also added around this time which at a much later date was converted to provide carriage storage and used subsequently for stabling and garaging.

Adam de Port must have inherited the family title because as Lord Basing he married Mabel, the heiress to the Normandy St John family and for a reason I was unable to discover, he decided to take the surname of his wife. This was the first hint that Fonmon could be linked to the St. John family.

Adam and Mabel had three children Alice, William and Robert. Alice was born in Pembroke indicating that another Welsh connection had been established by that time. What remains of the family history of that era says that Fonmon manor amounted to 900 acres and was bought as "a knight's fee" for either William or Robert with the holding owing allegiance to the Umphrevilles, lords of the neighbouring manor of Penmark. Without much evidence the story goes that Robert died young which would mean

that William inherited both Basing and Fonmon. He married Isobel Combmartin in 1266 at “*Faumont in Wales*”. Their grandson Sir John St John of Castle Faumont, Glamorganshire married Elizabeth Umfreville the heiress to Penmark, making him the principle land owner in the area, although by this time the Basing property had been lost. Even so, the Norman St John family had certainly done well in their first 200 years in Wales!

For the next two or three centuries the family status and that of Fonmon appear to change little. However there is an estate map of Fonmon dated 1622 by Evans Mouse which shows that Sir Anthony St John, having no male heir, Fonmon would pass to his cousin Sir John St John of Lydiard Tregoze. Sir John’s first wife Anne had died two months after the birth of her thirteenth child. It was the elder three of her sons who had fought and died on the Royalist side during the civil war, following which the family had to pay the price of being on the losing side, hence the need to sell Fonmon. A fourth son Edward was wounded at Newbury fighting on the parliamentarian side and died six months later. He must have been a favourite of his father for he is the subject of the unusual Golden Cavalier memorial, also in St. Mary’s church.

After the sale of Fonmen there was certainly money enough for John St John to purchase his baronetcy from James I for £1095 and to erect the family monuments in St Mary’s church. One monument commemorates both his first and second wives together with the thirteen children born to his first wife; all completed at least fourteen years before he died! His second wife Margaret was a widow and was already an effigy on one tomb, so during the remainder of her life could see herself on two tombs! A rather less elaborate but colourful monument was dedicated to Sir John’s grandparents Nicholas and Elizabeth. These memorials alone provide the evidence of substantial wealth and the effigies rank amongst the finest of their kind anywhere in the country and may have been the work of Nicholas Stone the leading sculptor of the day. While this firmly establishes the connection between Fonmon Castle and the St John family near Swindon, it is worth exploring a little more history to see what could have happened to explain the title of the 1st Viscount St John Bolingbroke and whether there was anything more than wealth to explain the steady rise in social status of the St John family name.

It was during the 15th century that a couple of marriages catapulted the St. John family into the middle of the Wars of the Roses and this was a period of time when they became very close to the throne of England. In 1425 Sir Oliver St John married Margaret Beauchamp the mother of Margaret Beaufort whose son Henry defeated Richard



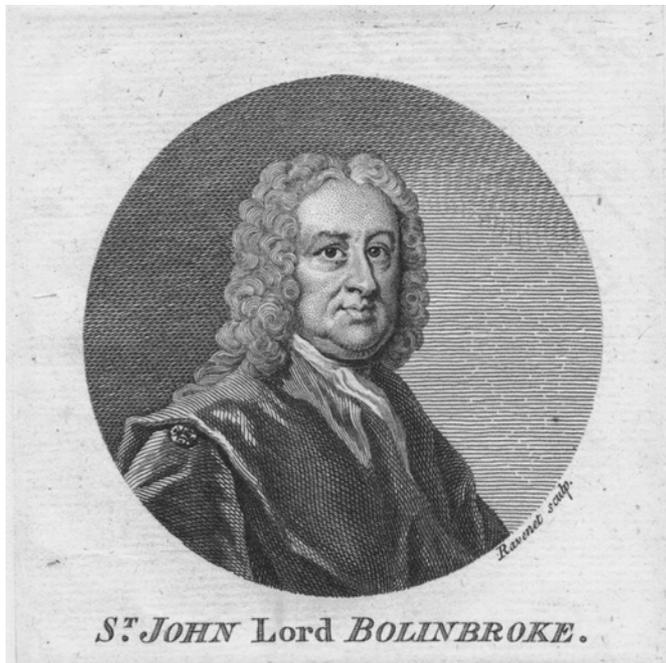
Fonmon Castle, Vale of Glamorgan

(Image courtesy of Wikipedia)

III at Bosworth. One branch of the St John family was now moving amongst the foremost families of the land and certainly in a position to exert their influence. When Oliver died leaving Margaret with six children she married the grandson of John of Gaunt, most familiar as the patriotic elder statesman of Shakespeare’s Richard II. When he inherited the Lancastrian estates he also became the greatest landowner in England. His son Henry had been born at Bolingbroke in Lincolnshire which I guess could account for the choice made a century or so later when a St John was ennobled by Queen Anne to become Viscount St John Bolingbroke, re-emphasising the family’s past links with the monarchy. As it happens, when Henry Bolingbroke became King his reign was repeatedly threatened by the revolts led by Owain Glyndŵr.

The eldest son of Oliver St John and Margaret Beauchamp eventually inherited Fonmon, Bletsoe and Lydiard Tregoze, which had been a Beauchamp property. Lydiard was where they chose to live, letting off Fonmon to the local gentry until it was later sold. Rather surprisingly, given the turbulent times of the 16th century, the St Johns managed to retain their status, one being ennobled as Lord St John of Bletsoe in 1558.

The 16th century was certainly a time when the Welsh branch of the St John family gained a reputation for honour and good governance. At a time marked by economic depression and severe hardship amongst the peasantry, corruption and criminal behaviour were predictable even in the courts of law. There was an Oliver St John for instance, who was frequently opposing the Mansell family of Margam and he turned to Sir Edward Stradling for help in securing an impartial jury to hear his suit concerning the title of the parsonage at Penmark: “.....*send me the names in writing of XXIII substantial and honest men ..*” he wrote, describing Sir Edward as not only a kinsman but a man of good governance, and making him chief steward of the St John family’s Glamorgan properties in 1575. His cousin Oliver St. John 1st Lord of Bletsoe and Fonmon



Engraving of 1st Viscount St John Bolingbroke (1678-1757) by Simon François Ravenet (Image courtesy of Wikipedia)

(1597 – 1673) had a similar philosophy. He was both a lawyer and a politician who refused to be bought off by an offer of Solicitor General from Charles 1st and also refused to participate in the King's trial.

The 1st Viscount St John Bolingbroke (1678-1757) was probably born at Lydiard and there is little doubt there were two sides to his character. On the one hand he was a brilliant orator, a notorious free thinker, an astute politician and a notable writer of philosophical debate. On the other hand he was also described as unscrupulous and devoid of morality or religious belief. He clearly had extraordinary political abilities, was Secretary of State for War at the age of twenty five and was greatly admired by Voltaire. However, his was a turbulent political career: he went into exile after Queen Anne died and the new king dismissed him and he changed sides more than once. He did however manage to retain friendships with Pope and Swift.

The descendants of Hugh de Port who arrived in Britain at the Norman Conquest and built Fonmon Castle, are still with us and include Anthony the 22nd Lord St. John of Bletsoe, and the 9th Viscount St. John Bolingbroke who now lives in New Zealand.

But what of Lydiard House? By the outbreak of World War II Lydiard House and Park were in a sad state of neglect and without any modern amenities. Lord Bolingbroke lived there with his invalid mother in greatly reduced circumstances. Lady Bolingbroke died in 1940 and the following year the house was requisitioned and Lord Bolingbroke, who was by this time a member of the local Home Guard, moved to a cottage on the estate. The parkland was requisitioned for an American army camp and much of the timber was felled and cleared during this period. In 1943 Lord Bolingbroke decided to sell his

ancestral home and much of the estate was bought by a local councillor who promptly and without profit sold it to Swindon Corporation for £4500. Today it provides a conference centre, restored state rooms to savour and a Stable cafe for light refreshments. The open parkland offers a delightful area for walks and picnics.

The origins of St Mary's church Tregoze lie somewhere in the 13th century and in spite of being some distance from a population centre today, has been used continuously for worship. Parishioners help to preserve and repair the building and with regard to the care of surviving art and antiquities, it has been helped by 'The Friends of Lydiard Tregoze. Fonmon Castle survives in a very different but beautiful setting from the time it was built, providing a home for the Boothby family since the middle of the 17th century and more recently an ideal venue for a variety of events. Little had I expected that the names of Fonmon, St. John, Tregoze and Bolingbroke would wind their way through the centuries between the Norman Conquest and the present day.

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Wikipedia



DAVID JONES (1895-1974)

David Jones was more profoundly influenced throughout his life by the landscape, language and myths of Wales than any of his contemporaries. An extraordinary and multi-talented man, he occupies a unique place in twentieth-century British art, and is often called the greatest painter-poet since William Blake.

It may seem a paradox that David Jones was born a Londoner, visited Wales regularly for just four years between 1924 and 1928, and never made his home here. But then until the 1950s almost all Welsh artists were obliged to make their careers largely outside Wales.

Jones's father came from Holywell in Flintshire, and passed on a deep sense of his Welsh identity to his son, who was to devote a lifetime to the study of a Welsh culture that he felt was lost to him. When the First World War broke out in 1914, he was determined to join a Welsh regiment. He was wounded on the Somme in that Welsh epic, the battle of Mametz Wood. After three years at Westminster School of Art, he joined a community of

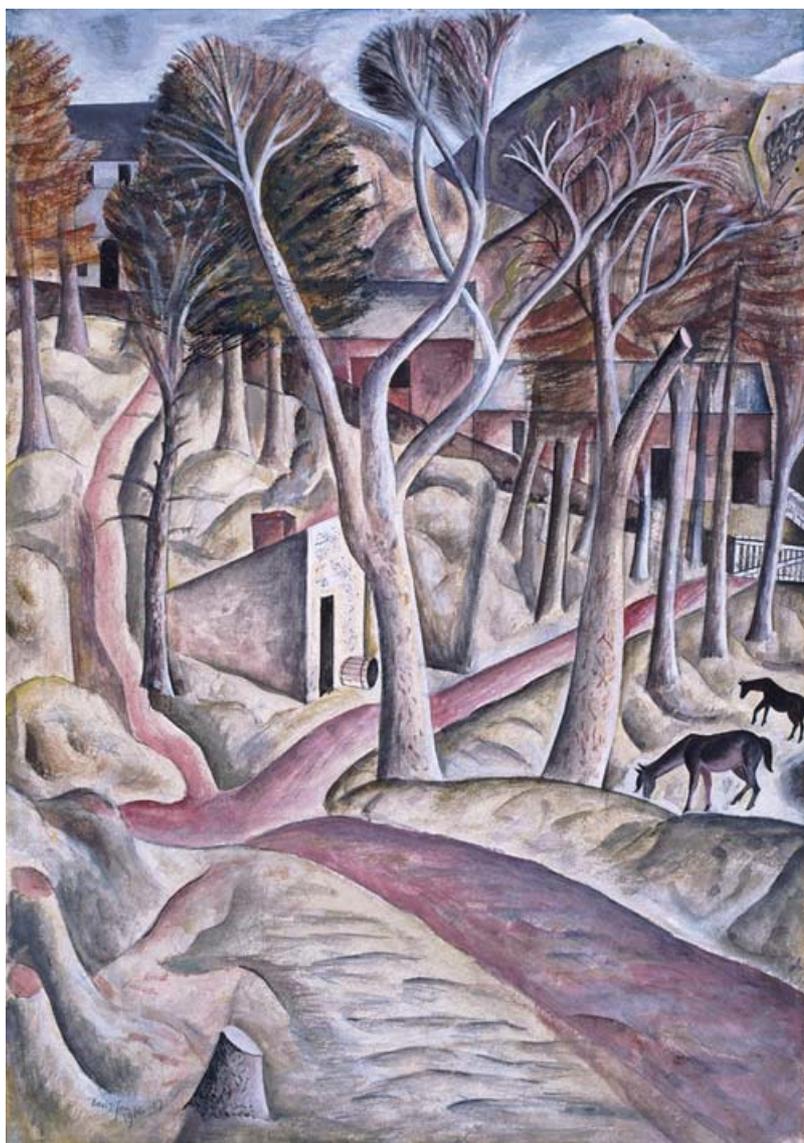
Catholic craftsmen at Ditchling in Sussex. One of its leaders was the sculptor, typographer and engraver Eric Gill, who was to have a pronounced influence on how he thought about art. He became engaged to Gill's daughter Petra for a while, and went with him when he moved his family from Ditchling to Capel-y-ffin in the Black Mountains. There Jones found himself as a painter, primarily in watercolour. He developed a personal and modernist vision of the Breconshire landscape that has its roots in the art of Cézanne and Van Gogh. During these years (1924-1928) Jones also spent time with his parents in the London suburb of Brockley, and at the Benedictine monastery on Caldy Island.

In 1927 he was commissioned to make a set of copper engravings to illustrate Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, and the following year he was elected a member of the modernist exhibiting group, the 7 & 5 Society. Late in 1932 when he had nearly completed his intricate, poetic narrative of his experience of the First World War, *In Parenthesis*, he had a nervous breakdown, and found it increasingly difficult to paint. He also turned his back on the modernist art world as it moved closer to abstraction, and spent most of the '30s holed up in a small hotel in Sidmouth.

In Parenthesis was published in 1937, and is now regarded as one of the great achievements of British literary modernism, alongside the works of James Joyce, T S Eliot, and D. H. Lawrence. More poetry followed, and he was also painting more during the Second World War. His work comprising large watercolours, delicate, highly detailed, scholarly, and representational, which often took months to complete. In 1945 he began to work on lettering and to paint inscriptions, drawing on passages from literary works in a mix of Latin, Welsh and Old English. He had another breakdown after the Second World War, and from 1948 he was to live in a single room in boarding houses in Harrow.

His inspirations, in both painting and in poetry, were his Catholicism, and especially the central mystery of the Mass, and the 'matter of Britain' the Arthurian Legends and the history of post-Roman Britain.

His late paintings are uniquely personal, being richly worked and full of allusions to theology, history and legend. His meditation *The Anathemata*, one of the great long poems of the twentieth century, was published in 1951. Two of his last great paintings encapsulate his post-war achievement, *Y Cyfarchiad i Fair* or *The Greeting to Mary* and *Trystan ac Essylt* both date from 1963. The



David Jones, *Capel y Ffin* (Pen, watercolour and bodycolour on paper, 1926-7)
© Estate of David Jones

first shows the angel Gabriel appearing to the Virgin who is seated in a garden within a landscape based on that around Capel-y-ffin. The second, over which he laboured for three years, depicts the central drama of the legend of Trystan and Essylt, when King Mark's knight and his master's bride drink a fatal love potion on their voyage from Ireland to Cornwall, and is full of richly complex iconographical detail.

Why then was this strange, shy, lonely man one of the greatest and most influential Welsh artists of the twentieth century? It is, I believe, because he identified so passionately with the idea of Wales, and of the importance of its language and culture to the shared experience of Britain over the last two thousand years. Jones was part of Wales's growing political and cultural consciousness during the '50s and '60s (a friend and correspondent was Saunders Lewis, a co-founder of Plaid Cymru). His work was seen here, for example in a major touring exhibition organised by the Welsh Arts Council in 1954, and he was awarded a gold medal by the National Eisteddfod in 1964. He shows us how an artist can develop a Welsh voice far beyond mere representation of place.

Oliver Fairclough

Oliver Fairclough is Keeper of Art at Amgueddfa Cymru



A LOVE FOR ART: THE ERIC AND JEAN CASS GIFT

Over the last 35 years, Eric and Jean Cass have established an outstanding and very personal collection of over 300 sculptures, ceramics, drawings, prints and paintings. In 2012, the Museum received a generous gift of twelve modern works from this private collection, made through the Contemporary Art Society. It includes a major work by Dutch artist Karel Appel and lithographs by famous Surrealist Joan Miró.

Eric and Jean Cass live in Surrey. In 1969, Eric Cass worked closely with architect Brian Sapseid to design a house called *Bleep*. The name *Bleep* is in recognition of Cass Electronics and the high-pitched sound emitted by paging receivers marketed by the company. The open plan, modern architecture of the house encouraged Eric to start purchasing modern and contemporary art to fill their home.

They collected over 300 works of art over 35 years: some purchased on-the-spot by intuition; others were sought out for several years. Eric and Jean formed strong friendships with many of the artists, who would often oversee the installation of their work at *Bleep* and return for friendly visits.

Their strongest affiliation was with the artist Niki de Saint Phalle. Eric and Jean Cass owned the largest private collection of de Saint Phalle's work in the UK.

In 2012, they made the decision to donate their collection to museums and galleries in the UK, so that audiences from around the country could enjoy their collection. The Contemporary Art Society was appointed to manage the distribution of the Cass Collection to its member museums as part of its programme of Gifts and Bequests. Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales was nominated as one of the beneficiaries alongside The Ashmolean, Brighton Museum & Art Gallery, Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Leeds Art Gallery, The Hepworth Wakefield, the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh and the Gallery of Modern Art Glasgow.

The Gift to Amgueddfa Cymru

It is important to remember that the works gifted to the Museum are not only exceptional works of art by internationally renowned artists, but that these were part of a very personal collection with a place inside a home. Two of the Joan Miró lithographs hung in the cloakroom and corridor welcoming anyone who came into the house, while John Hoyland's Platter sat on a coffee table in the lounge and Karel Appel's major work *The City* greeted anyone relaxing in the sitting room.

Karel Appel (1921-2006)

Eric Cass developed an early admiration for the work of Appel and also purchased a major sculpture by Appel titled *Tête Soleil*, 1966, which has been gifted to Wolverhampton Museum and Art Gallery.

The City by Karel Appel, shows a naked woman and a dog roaming through a desolate landscape of skyscrapers. It deals with the subject of city decay and poverty inspired by Karel Appel's experience of the streets of New York in 1981. The paint is applied thickly, in broad expressive strokes. The primitive lines, which form the figures and the buildings, mimic the simplicity of children's drawings. Appel was born in Amsterdam in 1921. In 1946, following his studies at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Amster-



The sitting-room at *Bleep*

© Douglas Atfield photography

Image not displayed because of copyright restrictions

Karel Appel, *The City* (Oil on canvas, 191cm x 222 cm, 1982)

© Karel Appel Foundation / DACS

dam, Appel travelled to Denmark and there met the Danish artists who would form part of his International Cobra group in 1948. This group rejected the western rationalist approach to art and embraced primitivism, childlike art and explored diverse ways of commenting upon the human condition. Appel broke from this group in 1952. He went on to become part of Art Informel. Among the members of this group were American Abstract Expressionists, Willem de Kooning and Jackson Pollock.

Joan Miró (1893-1983)

Also within the Eric and Jean Cass gift are four lithographs by the Catalan artist Joan Miró. One of the lithographs is called *L'Enfance D'Ubu*, 1975. The simplicity of line is deliberately childlike to illustrate the childhood adventures of Ubu. This series of work was inspired by the character of Ubu in Alfred Jarry's play *Ubu Roi*. Miró read the play several times and illustrated a collector's edition in 1966. He produced his own book called *Ubu's Childhood* or *L'Enfance D'Ubu* in 1975. *Ubu's Childhood* consists of Catalan and Majorcan sayings and humour collected by the artist, in-keeping with the character of Ubu.

Joan Miró was born in Barcelona in 1893. He began studying art at the age of fourteen at the La Lonja School of Fine Art. In 1920, during his first trip to Paris, Miró visited the studio of Pablo Picasso and attended a Dada Festival. He moved to Paris the following year and began to meet artists and writers who would eventually form the Surrealist group. This group believed in producing art, which emerged from the subconscious mind, whether that be through the representation of dreams or of thoughts discovered by a variety of psychoanalytic methods. Miró became renowned for his automatic paintings and drawings, which display a childlike form and purity of unconscious thought free from the control of reason.

The addition of the Eric and Jean Cass gift has significantly contributed to the representation of late twentieth century art in the collection of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales for which we are grateful to Eric and Jean Cass and the Contemporary Art Society. The other works given to the Museum are:

Joan Miró, *L'Enfance D'Ubu*, 1975, lithograph on paper

Joan Miró, *Oda a Joan Miró*, 1973, XXV/XXV; lithograph

Joan Miró, *Oda a Joan Miró*, 1973, XXV/XXV; lithograph

Joan Miró, *Composition*, 1957, lithograph
 Patrick Caulfield, *Commemorative Vase*, 1979, Bone china
 Brigitte Deuge, *Ceramic Plate*, 1992, Porcelain
 Peter Hedegaard, *Red, Marron and Blue Abstract*, 1969, Edition 2 of 35; lithograph
 John Hoyland, *Platter No. 11*, 1985, Earthenware
 Bjorn Wiinblad, *Susanne I Badet*, 1988, multiple porcelain

Melissa Munro

Melissa Munro is Derek Williams Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at Amgueddfa Cymru

Notes

For more information on the Eric and Jean Cass gift please visit: <http://www.contemporaryartsociety.org/our-work-with-public-collections/the-eric-jean-cass-gift>

The Contemporary Art Society is a national charity that encourages an appreciation and understanding of contemporary art in the UK. Since 1910 it has donated over 8,000 works to museums and public galleries - from Bacon, Freud, Hepworth and Moore in their day through to the influential artists of our own times - championing new talent, supporting curators, and encouraging philanthropy and collecting in the UK.



WORKTOWN: THE DRAWINGS OF FALCON HILDRED

The National Slate Museum Llanberis is presently hosting a stunning new panel exhibition of the remarkable paintings and drawings of the industrial artist, Falcon Hildred. A resident in Blaenau Ffestiniog since 1969, Falcon Hildred's mission has been to make a visual record of the buildings of a disappearing industrial culture.

In an interview in 2012, Falcon Hildred speaks of how his lifetime passion for recording Britain's industrial heritage began. In the early 1950s he became more and more aware that post-war redevelopment involved not just the destruction of buildings irretrievably damaged in the war but also perfectly sound buildings full of interesting details. For him such buildings were an indelible part of his childhood and so he wanted to record them before they were pulled down. He always wanted to do this through drawings made on the spot and at first this was difficult as it could only be done in his spare time as he then was working as an industrial designer.

From this starting point he has managed over the years to document a wealth of buildings and landscapes of the nineteenth and twentieth century industry, and in doing so has produced works of high aesthetic, historic and social value. As he explains:

"The thing about buildings is that they're about people. Everything we do in life is either in or around buildings. We celebrate, we teach, we live, we work, we heal, we compete, we store – everything is done in and around buildings, and they therefore embody all our needs, all our hopes, our beliefs, our fears. They are the symbols of all our values, really, in civilisation, from cottage to cathedral. They are the symbols of what we want and what we believe. So the risk is that when you destroy a building you risk destroying something of ourselves."

In the late 1960s, after he became a full-time artist, he moved to Blaenau Ffestiniog, having been inspired by the wonderful opportunities that its industrial archaeology represented. These drawings are not just a record of buildings and of industrial landscapes in the area but a way of capturing the social history they represent.

Tŷ Uncorn (illustrated below in the photograph) is one of the oldest surviving domestic buildings associated with the slate industry in Blaenau Ffestiniog. It was built in about 1810 by Lord Newborough to house his workers and is actually four dwellings clustered around a shared central chimney stack. The name means 'one-chimney house' but also refers to the mythical 'unicorn'. It is also sometimes called 'Inkpot House' owing to its similarity in shape to a traditional glass ink bottle.

The Oakley Gash (on page 14) is a panorama showing the terraced working of the Oakley slate quarries, which can be seen as one enters Blaenau Ffestiniog from the north over the Crimea Pass. On the left of the picture are the terraced houses of Tal-y-Waenydd, and beyond them are the Llechwedd quarries and slate mill.

Finally, *Fron Haul* (on page 14) is an image of the National Slate Museum's terrace of quarrymen's houses, 1-4



Falcon Hildred alongside a selection of his drawings about the Tŷ Uncorn (One chimney house), 1978 © RCAHMW



Falcon Hildred, **Fron Haul** (2009)

Fron Haul, as they were in 2009, having been at the museum for 10 years and been visited by over a million people. Their original location was in Tanygrisiau near Blaenau Ffestiniog and they were taken down, stone by stone, and rebuilt at the Museum in 1998. Indeed the National Slate Museum also commissioned Falcon Hildred to record this row of houses *in situ* in 1998 before they were taken down, stone by stone, and rebuilt at the Museum.

The exhibition, which has previously been at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, documents the industrial past of both England and Wales but the focus at the National Slate Museum is primarily on images of the slate industry. The Welsh slate industry was renowned for the quality of its products, especially its roofing slates and slabs. During its heyday in the late nineteenth century, slate was exported to markets all over the world. In addition, the slate industry affected the visual character of numerous British industrial towns, through providing the roofing material for mill settlements in Lancashire and

Yorkshire, mining villages in the south Wales valleys, housing across London and other towns.

The slate industry also created its own 'worktowns' in north-west Wales, where towns and villages built of slate were surrounded by whole landscapes dedicated to the quarrying, mining, processing and transport of the same material. It is not surprising that much of Falcon's exploration of the industry has focused on Blaenau Ffestiniog, for it was the largest of the slate towns and one of the greatest slate-producing areas in the world, where even today there are the remains of twenty quarries.

The exhibition has been created by The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, working in partnership with the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust and with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Commission

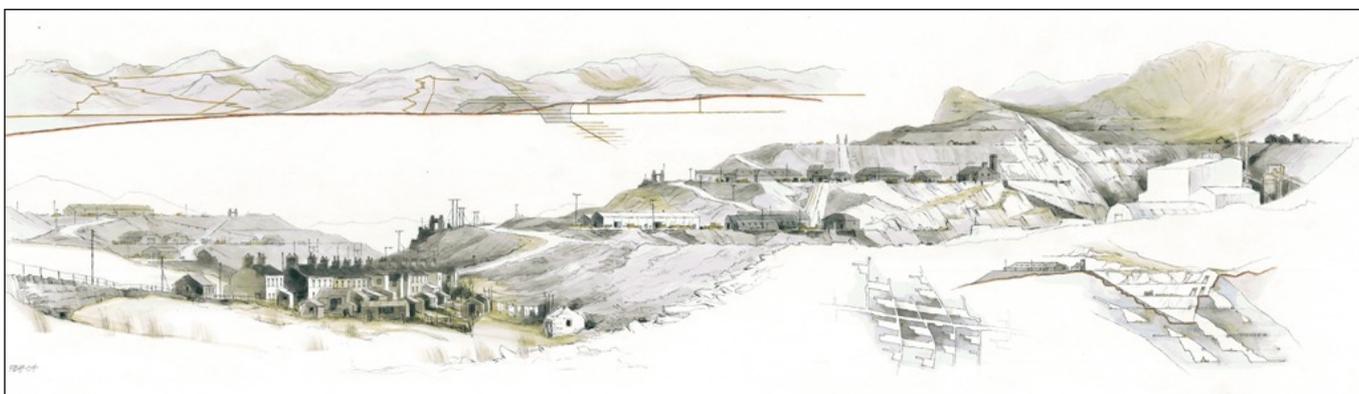
has acquired a unique collection of over 600 of Falcon's original drawings of industrial buildings and landscapes. Dr Peter Wakelin, the Secretary of the Commission, adds: "*Falcon's lifetime of work amounts to a unique record of working-class cultural and industrial landscapes. The collection is a superb resource for anyone interested in this heritage, much of which has disappeared since Falcon documented it. This exhibition and the book accompanying it will make many more people aware of his work and the fascinating history it stands for.*"

Diane Davies

Editors' Notes

The exhibition can be seen at the National Slate Museum, Llanberis until 6th January 2014. The Museum is open daily 10:00am until 5:00pm until the end of October and then 10:00am to 4:00pm from Sunday to Friday between November and March.

There is a book to coincide with the exhibition: •• **Worktown: The drawings of Falcon Hildred** contains all of Falcon's drawings and is available from the National Slate Museum's shop priced • £16.99



Falcon Hildred, **The Oakley Gash** (1974)

© RCAHMW

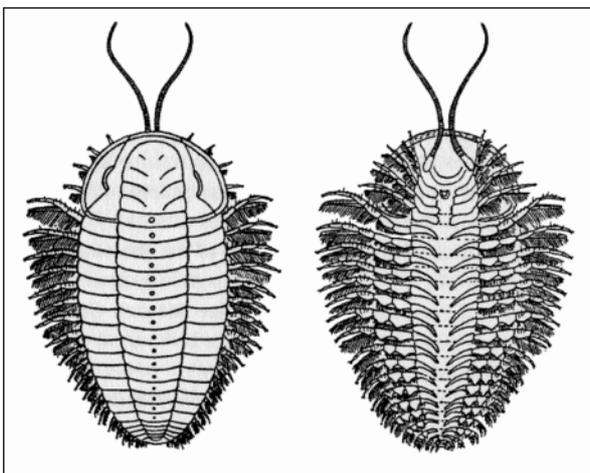


The Museum's golden fossil from Martin Quarry, New York State. Larger trilobite approx. 3 cm long

GOLDEN WONDER! RARE FOSSIL TRILOBITE

Trilobites are common in the rocks in Wales, but this rare specimen differs from others in our collection. Preserved beneath the carapace are the legs and on the head a pair of delicate antennae ('feelers'). These features stand out vividly in gold against a black shale background. Such exceptional fossils give us great insights into how trilobites moved, fed and sensed the world around them.

All trilobites had legs and antennae when they were alive, but these were quite soft and usually rotted away before they could be fossilized. Most trilobite fossils are just parts of the hard exoskeleton or carapace and tell us little about the softer parts of the body.



C.E. Beecher's 1839 reconstruction of *Triarthrus eatoni* based on fossils from his Trilobite Bed. The legs have two branches, an inner walking leg and an outer gill with fine filaments.

Why is the trilobite golden?

The golden colour is because the animal has been fossilized in pyrite, also known as iron pyrites or Fool's Gold. Fossilization of soft body parts in pyrite is very rare, and is only known from a couple of places in the world. This particular fossil comes from rocks of Ordovician age (approx. 455 million years ago) from New York State in the USA. Soft-bodied fossils preserved in pyrite are also found in the much younger Hunsrück Slate in Germany, of early Devonian age (approx. 390 million years ago).

Pyrite is an iron sulphate mineral (FeS_2), and it can form where there are low oxygen levels and lots of iron. The trilobites were probably swept up by an underwater avalanche and buried in deep sea mud. The mud would have been rich in sulphates and dissolved iron, but low in oxygen. Sulphate-reducing bacteria would have helped decay the trilobites, releasing sulphides. The sulphides combined with the dissolved iron to form pyrite, which replaced or coated the trilobite tissues as they decayed.

Beecher's Trilobite Bed

Pyritized trilobites have been known from the famous Beecher's Trilobite Bed in New York State for over a century. The bed was discovered by amateur fossil collector William S. Valiant in 1892, but is named after Charles Emerson Beecher, an academic from Yale University to whom Valiant showed his amazing trilobite finds. Beecher leased the land between 1893 and 1895, and quarried out as many fossils as he could, until he thought there was nothing left to be found. He wrote many scientific papers about the trilobites until his untimely death in 1904. The trilobites were found in just one thin (4 cm) layer of rock, laid down around 455 million years ago, during the Ordovician period.

The Trilobite Bed was rediscovered in 1984 and since then, more beds containing golden trilobites have been found in New York State. In 2004, an amateur collector started searching about 50 miles away, and eventually found a rock layer of the same age containing trilobites. Our specimen comes from this new quarry, now known as Martin Quarry after its finder. Many important fossils have been found in Martin Quarry and studied by Professor Derek Briggs of the Yale Peabody Museum, and his colleagues.

Growing Up

Our specimen (*Triarthrus eatoni*) has a second, tiny trilobite next to the larger one. Trilobites grew from larva to adult by going through a series of moults. As they got older, they regularly moulted off their old exoskeleton to grow bigger. Many different sizes of *Triarthrus* have been found in the Trilobite Bed, but none of its earliest larval stage. Trilobites of various ages clearly lived together, but the larvae must have lived somewhere else. They may have floated around as plankton in the water column, while larger juveniles and adults lived on the sea bed.

Lucy McCobb

Lucy McCobb is a Palaeontologist at Amgueddfa Cymru



BOOK REVIEW

The Flight of the Cuckoo by Don Llewellyn
(Dinefwr Publishers, to be published Sept. 2013)

This fascinating novel is based on the true story of Catherine Griffith, the last woman to be publicly executed in Glamorganshire, in 1791.

Catherine was born in 1760, and brought up in poverty by her mother who had been left alone after her husband had been press-ganged by the navy. They had to labour very hard on a farm until the mother died, after which she went to live and work in Parc, a mansion on the outskirts of Pentyrch, where she became a lady's maid to the mistress, Madam Price, learning English in her service. All went well until she met the handsome scoundrel Henry James, already a self-confessed thief, whom she ran away with and joined in a life of crime.

This is the author Don Llewellyn's second novel, the first being *The Kissing Gate* also set in Pentyrch about evacuees in the war years. He is a native of the village and relies on his extensive local knowledge, knowing every inch of it from abandoned 'bell pits' (small coal drifts) to the best blackberry bush around. He writes of a Pentyrch as it would have been in the eighteenth century, much more agricultural then but with quarries and the famous Pen-

tyrch ironworks. With a successful background as a television editor and producer, the author produces from actual newspaper reports and his own creative art a compelling story that holds ones constant interest and attention.

The author paints an idyllic picture of Catherine's childhood before the family was hit by hard times and uses the cuckoo's call to identify her birthday in April, events at different stages of her life and also perhaps as a symbol. Don portrays his heroine as a sweet-natured young woman, totally in thrall to her lover but her statement to the presiding judge at the final court appearance seems to say otherwise.

Social matters of the late eighteenth century are brought into the tale: gradual changes in religion, such as the beginning of the Congregational movement in Wales; the slavery question, whether it was moral to become rich from the abduction and sale of slaves. Besides the serious issues of the times, the author depicts late eighteenth century life as Catherine and Henry would have encountered it on their romantic adventures around Wales and England, staying in farms and taverns and sometimes sleeping rough. These include the cruelties of cockfighting and bear baiting; not to forget the ghoulish watching of public executions.

The tale concludes with the actual report of the gradual acceptance of their chilling fate and the spiritual repentance of the doomed pair written by the Reverend Molyneux Lowder who was in attendance. He reported every detail including a simple but utterly poignant listing of the costs of the execution, to give the story an effective and devastating end.

Jean Henderson



MUSEUM NEWS

The Museum on the Maes

One of the most buzzing and welcoming venues on the National Eisteddfod field at Denbigh was the National Museum tent. For several events, it literally bulged at the seams; all stools seemed to be occupied by at least two people.

Ken Brassil was, as usual, mesmerising on the history, geology and archaeology of the area, while Robin Gwyn-daf, formerly of St Fagans: National History Museum, and a native of the area introduced us to some less familiar parts of Kathryn of Berain's life. Other events included local field visits. Some visitors were lucky enough to explore the area with Ken and other Museum staff. Others went with them to discover local houses such as

Lleweni and Bachegraig, associated with former gentry families like the Cloughs, Middletons and Thelwalls, and were introduced to some of Katherine of Berain's in-laws in the remarkable church at Llanfarchell, a stone's throw from the Eisteddfod field.

Congratulations to all those members of staff, too numerous to mention here, who helped design and carry out such a varied programme of events on the Maes. What was particularly appreciated and welcomed was the interest and presence, on several days, of our Director, David Anderson, who frequently had to squeeze himself into a very tight space among the visitors, and appeared to be enjoying his total immersion into Welsh-medium culture.

Visions of Mughal India

Visions of Mughal India: The Collection of Howard Hodgkin, which is on tour from the Ashmolean Museum, brings together a selection of outstanding paintings and drawings from the collection of Howard Hodgkin. The artist Howard Hodgkin has been a passionate collector of Indian paintings since his school days and his collection is considered one of the finest of its kind in the world.

The exhibition contains examples of most of the main types of Indian court painting that flourished during the Mughal period (c. 1550–1850). It includes illustrations of epics and myths, royal portraits and scenes of court life and hunting. There is also a large and spectacular group of elephant portraits. In addition some of the works in the collection vividly evoke the urban or daily life of India, a country which has inspired Hodgkin on the frequent visits that he has made over some fifty years.



Kishangarh, *A Lady Singing* (Gouache with gold on paper, c.1740)
© The Collection of Howard Hodgkin

If you have not had time to visit *Visions of Mughal India: The Collection of Howard Hodgkin*, now is the time to go. Children will love the 'Visions of India Family Trail'. And while you are there you can go to the shop and book a seat to hear Howard Hodgkin himself talking about the collection on Wednesday October 9th at 6:00 pm in the Reardon Smith Lecture Theatre. He will be introduced by Rana Mitter, presenter of BBC's *Nightwaves* and Professor of the History and Politics of Modern China.

Alfred Wallace Anniversary celebrations

With our thanks to Julian Carter and Katherine Slade we are able to report that on 7th November the BioSyb department, in particular, will be celebrating the anniversary and accomplishments of Alfred Wallace, involving an exhibition and a series of events. A daring explorer and brilliant naturalist, he was born in the village of Llanbadoc near Usk in 1823 the eighth of nine children to parents struggling financially from a series of poor investments. A small legacy led to a move to Hertford where Wallace attended the local grammar school until he was fourteen, when he then joined his brother in London. Here he had the opportunity to have access to books and learning at places like the Mechanics Institutes and to new social ideas when people like the Welsh reformer Robert Owen greatly influenced him and the implications of the Enclosures Act enraged him.

It was as an apprentice surveyor that his field and observational skills developed and he was able to return to Wales at Kington and the Vale of Neath. While often out of work for long periods he indulged his growing passion for natural history and developed his own herbarium and a passion for beetles. Growing restless and inspired by Charles Darwin and others he set off with Henry Bates to the Amazon and afterwards to Malaya collecting specimens all the while, many new to science. His brilliance was noticed and in 1858 he famously co-published *The Theory of Evolution by Natural Selection* with Charles Darwin.

The Case of the Missing Railings

Another detective story from Tom Sharpe (Curator of Palaeontology) and from his exploration of Dr Douglas Bassett's papers. It raises an interesting question about whether some rather impressive railings linked to splendid pillars and Museum gates, went to the bottom of the Bristol Channel! Tom came across a photograph labelled *The Museum's East Gates* and decided to find out where they might have been and what happened to them. The site was quite easy to locate because the steps are still visible leading up to the North end of the Reardon Smith lecture theatre from the pavement in Park Place. All that is left of the stone pillars are their granite bases now capped with artificial stone. There were many stone plinths of this kind around parks and private houses supporting the railings that were all requisitioned during the Second World War to provide materials for the manufacture of tanks and munitions. It was in 1942 that despite various arguments to retain them only one panel of railings was left

alongside what now became a rather pointless pair of gates, "for purposes of record".

After the war the Museum sought to reinstate the railings but the licence needed for the manufacture of steel in 1948 was refused given the shortages that continued for some years. Eventually the gates and pillars of Portland stone were dismantled and removed. But what became of them? A long serving colleague of Tom's remembered that in the 1970s a pair of metal gates had been in a storage facility which the Museum had in the area now called Cardiff Bay and that the gates just might have been abandoned. In a further search Tom discovered that stories still abound in London that confiscated but unused iron railings had been dumped near the mouth of the Thames where to this day the amount of iron is enough to deflect a ship's compass! This clearly raise a couple of questions in Tom's mind such as was the collection of scrap metal no more than a propaganda exercise and could the museum railings be at the bottom of the Bristol channel?

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 recently. You may be wondering why there has been yet another increase in price but basically the answer is that the charge the Museum makes is fixed by what Cardiff City Council decides to charge for parking in the same area.

This is because permission to use this car park is subject to a planning agreement that was put in place when the centre block was built in the 1990's. 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.

Other News

The National History Museum redevelopment project at St Fagans is progressing very well so why not make a visit to see the changes evolve before your very eyes. The designs for the new galleries in the Main Building, at Oakdale and the new building *Gweithdy*, have been warmly received by the Board of Trustees and fund raising for their completion is now underway. Mark Richards, Deputy Director and conscientious supporter of the Friends will become the Director of the St Fagans Project from September when John Williams-Davies retires.

You will be pleased to know, I am sure, that the Museum's Learning Department has won the prestigious Sandford Award for Heritage Education 2013.

National Museum Cardiff: Talks on a Friday at 1:00pm

4th October: Recent acquisitions in contemporary ceramics by Rachel Conroy.

11th October: *Welsh Porcelain 1813-1826 'equal in every respect to the French'* by Andrew Renton.

18th October: David Cox's oil painting techniques, an overview of current research by Rebecca Ellison.

1st November: An introduction to Manet's *Portrait Of Mademoiselle Claus* on loan from the Ashmolean.

8th and 15th November: *Uncommon Ground: Land Art in Britain 1966-1979*.

6th December: Beth Mc Intyre introduces *Llareggab: Peter Blake Illustrates Dylan Thomas's Under Milk Wood*.

13th December: *Illustrating Dylan* by Jeff Towns, antiquarian book dealer and Dylan Thomas expert.

In addition on Monday 9th December there is a special evening lecture in association with the forthcoming Peter Blake/Dylan Thomas exhibition.

Diane Davies, Judy Edwards & Ann Saer



FRIENDS' NEWS

As you may have read on page 2, we shall be producing two Newsletters a year, one in the Spring and one in the Autumn. There will continue to be additional information sent in the form of Fliers for events such as lectures, outings, trips or lunches/dinners and these will be sent out regularly four times a year. The drop in the number of *Whats On* will have an impact on postage costs and you will now understand why we are increasingly interested in using email where possible to communicate with Friends. As well as being cheaper it does also ensure that you receive an up to date Timetable of Events for the months ahead. The calendar of events for 2014 is now very near completion and can be viewed on our website.

Judy Edwards



BAfM NEWS

This year the Annual Conference of BAfM is in Aberdeen but next year it will be in Swansea when the huge British Empire panels made by Sir Frank Brangwyn RA (1867-1956) will be hanging in the Brangwyn Hall. They are amongst the most important examples of his decorative work on a large scale. Both Cardiff and Swansea had shown an interest in having the commemorative panels because of his standing in the world of art and his Welsh connections. How the panels and associated preparatory drawings came to Swansea has been described as 'one of triumph over disaster'!

Judy Edwards

