

Spring/Summer 2016

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cymru



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Nawdd

The magazine for the Patrons of Amgueddfa Cymru



Membership: April 2015-March 2016

Membership currently stands at 155 Patrons.

A warm welcome to those of you who became Patrons this year; we hope you will enjoy meeting your fellow members and becoming part of the community of Patrons and Friends of Amgueddfa Cymru. There is much to do and see in 2016-17 and we look forward to welcoming you to the museums over the course of the coming year.

ENJOY...cafe and retail discounts

As a Patron you are entitled to discounts to help with savings on days

out to all of our museums. Enjoy a 10% discount in our cafes, shops and online. Just show your membership card at the start of your transaction to claim the discount.

RENEWALS – Thank You

Your support, given through annual subscriptions and more, continues to ensure that the national treasures and collections of Wales will continue to be cherished, enjoyed, conserved and displayed for generations to come.

Fundraising

St Fagans Gift Circle

Since the Gift Circle was launched in October 2013, we have raised an astonishing £88,850 (not including gift aid) and a further £2,680 in donations of less than £1,000.

We are thrilled to tell you that an impressive £58,380 of that figure was donated by Patrons of Amgueddfa Cymru. A huge thank-you to all those whose gifts have contributed to the building and fit-out of the innovative new workshop space Gweithdy, the new galleries Wales Is... and Life Is..., the Learning Centre, Bryn Eryr Iron Age Roundhouses and Llys Llywelyn.

Llys Llywelyn: the project to reconstruct a medieval prince's court at St Fagans was also the focus for two fundraising events in London during 2015 – at Gray's Inn and the St James Court Hotel, as well as being a key

feature of awareness-raising events in Anglesey and St Fagans.

These events helped to take the story of the redevelopment project beyond Wales and they were successful in attracting financial as well as ambassadorial support. We were thrilled to welcome celebrities such as Eddie Butler, Gerald Davies, Catrin Finch, Sian Lloyd and Owen Teale to the evening at the St James Court Hotel, all of whom spoke passionately about Wales and their support for St Fagans. We were also very pleased that a couple of Patrons were able to make the journey to London to support us and to assist in hosting a table.

Other funds

Patrons have also been responsible for donating funds towards the commissioning of a 3-D model of *Dracorraptor Hanigani*, Wales's very own dinosaur fossil, as well as funds to create a dedicated information leaflet on the dinosaur for visitors and school groups. Other gifts over the year included donations to Natural Sciences and Learning. You also raised almost £2,000 at the Christmas event to support the Archaeology & Numismatics Department for the exciting new exhibition *Treasures: Adventures in Archaeology*.



Helmed Gorinthaidd
750-650 CC

(Front cover image)

Diary reminder:

Wednesday 8 June - a summer evening at St Fagans.

We hope you can join us for this exclusive visit to Llys Llywelyn in the company of Dr Steve Burrow, Head of Historic Buildings and Janet Wilding, Head of the Historic Buildings Unit. See for yourself the progress on the building site with those who are actually building it; imagine tables laid out for a feast, with banners hung from white walls gleaming in the candlelight and the Prince and his Lady sat in the upper hall warmed by a fire in an open hearth. Everything displayed will be commissioned from craftsmen and based on evidence from Welsh literature, contemporary illustration and archaeological evidence.

The event will launch a new Patrons Appeal for Llys Llywelyn, similar to our hugely successful appeal for the fitting-out of St Teilo's Church back in 2007.

You have always been extremely generous in supporting projects at St Fagans and now we are asking for your help once again. There will be something for everyone to sponsor; indeed the gift range will be anything from just £25 for a wooden bowl right up to the commissioning of the Prince's Throne, the design of which is based on an illustration found in a copy of the laws of Hywel Dda, which was probably produced in Gwynedd in the 13th century.

We hope you will want to be involved as much in this groundbreaking project as you were for St Teilo's Church almost ten years ago. We look forward to welcoming you to the Llys for a wonderful evening, which will begin with a drinks reception at Oakdale Workmen's Institute and end with a light supper after our visit to Llys Llywelyn. **BOOK NOW** - full details of the evening will be mailed soon but you can book now by calling (029) 2057 3182 or at patrons@museumwales.ac.uk Guests are very welcome.





Players of People's Postcode Lottery boost their support with an extra £25,000



We are delighted to announce that players of People's Postcode Lottery have awarded an extra £1.425 million to long-term supported charities. Amgueddfa Cymru is one of 57 charities that will receive the extra £25,000 award from players of the charity lottery.

The additional funding was announced at the 2016 People's Postcode Lottery Charity Gala which took place in January at the Assembly Rooms in Edinburgh and was a celebration of the hard work achieved by charities supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery.

The funding ensures the Museum can continue to offer a dynamic programme of events, activities and exhibitions for visitor to all our museums.

Thanks to vital funding from the People's Postcode Lottery, 2016 is a big year for exhibitions and events at National Museum Cardiff. From *Treasures: Adventure in Archaeology*; to *Wriggle* - an exciting new family friendly exhibition looking at the importance of worms in the garden and on the seashore; and a special exhibition on Quentin Blake's illustrations of Roald Dahl books to celebrate the centenary of the Welsh born author, funding from the players of People's Postcode Lottery will be put to good use.

The People's Postcode Lottery has generously supported Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales since 2013 and funding also enables the Museum to build on its work in providing visitors, particularly children and young people at risk of exclusion from formal education, with new skills, self-confidence and experiences that will raise their aspirations and help them seek further education and employment opportunities.

As well as supporting the exhibitions programme at National Museum Cardiff, a proportion of the People's Postcode Lottery funding also supports the salaries of two apprentice stonemasons at St Fagans National History Museum. They are working with the Museum's specialist builders on the recreation of Llys Llywelyn, a medieval Princes' court based on the archaeological site on Anglesey.

As part of *Treasures: Adventures in Archaeology*, Amgueddfa Cymru will be working with a local Cardiff charity, 'Action Caerau Ely, Getaway and CAER Heritage' allowing people from the local community to curate their own display case to coincide with the exhibition. This will provide an opportunity for participants to increase learning skills, gain confidence and engage with their local museum in a way which they've never done before.

David Anderson, Director General, said:

"The People's Postcode Trust has generously supported Amgueddfa Cymru since 2013, allowing us to change, through culture, the way we engage with the people of Wales.

"I'd like to thank players of People's Postcode Lottery – and especially those in Wales - for their continued generous support. The additional £25,000 awarded to us is invaluable. This vital funding ensures we can continue to offer a dynamic programme of events, activities and exhibitions, and this at a time when public institutions are feeling the effects of austerity.

"With People's Postcode Lottery support, we can continue to reach out to our visitors and the wider community, giving them an opportunity to learn about and get involved in their own culture and heritage."





CYMRU'N COFIO WALES REMEMBERS 1914 - 1918

Recruitment, Remembrance, Recovery

As part of the ongoing commemoration programme for 2016. Amgueddfa Cymru has an exciting programme of exhibitions, events and activities exploring the experience of living through war and the impact it had on the lives of ordinary people across the country.

Exhibitions

Some of our popular exhibitions from last year will be touring to other Amgueddfa Cymru museums and institutions, giving people in different regions of Wales the opportunity to see them. *"Efforts and Ideals: Prints of the First World War"* is on display at the National Library of Wales from January to May. The exhibition, displaying images of propaganda, contains prints from some of the most celebrated artists of the period. *Working for Victory – Welsh Industry and the First World War* will be at the National Wool Museum in Drefach.

The National Slate Museum looks at the response of the slate – quarrying communities to the recruitment campaign in the exhibition *"For Freedom and For Empire"* which runs until the end of June and will then be displayed at the National Wool Museum.

"War: What is it good for?" as the song says "absolutely nothing". But is that true? The National Roman Legion Museum will highlight the medical advancements that have occurred during wars throughout the time, focussing on those revealed during the First World War and by the Roman Army.

"Forget me not: Postcards from the First World War" during the war postcards and greeting cards became key means of communication between serving soldiers and their families. From mass produced embroidered cards sent from France to photographic portraits of soldiers and sentimental illustrations of separated lovers the exhibition, at the National Waterfront Museum, offers an insight into the everyday experiences of ordinary men and women whose lives were touched by war.

July marks the centenary of the Battle of Mametz Wood, one of the most significant and bloodiest battles for Welsh soldiers. *"War's Hell! - The Battle of Mametz Wood in Art"* opens in April at National Museum Cardiff. The star exhibit of the exhibition will be the Christopher Williams painting *The Welsh Division at the Battle of Mametz Wood*, commissioned by Lloyd George to commemorate the battle.



As part of the public programme for the exhibition the Museum is working in partnership with Welsh National Opera and Cardiff University on the **"Come and sing at the museum – songs from the Trenches"** which will take place in the main hall of National Museum Cardiff on the **3 June**. The event will bring together young writers groups from across Wales, London and Portsmouth, opera singers from *"In Parenthesis"* and local choirs who will all perform a selection of popular First World War songs including *Sosban Fach*. The event will be streamed live on social media by the youth forum from National Museum Cardiff.



St Fagans Castle Publication

On 22 March 1916, the Red Cross opened an auxiliary hospital in a banqueting hall in the grounds of St Fagans Castle. During the First World



War, the Castle was home to the Earl and Countess of Plymouth who were both actively involved in the war effort. To mark a century since the opening of the hospital, this book will outline its history and uncover some of the personal stories of those who worked, convalesced and lived at St Fagans Castle during the First World War.

The publication is set for release in Easter 2016.

Talks, Tours & Family Activities

Amgueddfa Cymru has an extensive engagement programme planned for the year ahead. Print making workshops, talks including "Our Museum during the Great War" which focusses on some of the poignant staff stories of the period, family activities looking at food and communication during the First World War and guided tours around the grounds of St Fagans Castle shining light on the hidden history of the estate during that period.

Digital Heritage

In 2016 work will continue on the on-line digital database of First World War objects from the Museum's collections with the addition of material from Art and Archaeology <http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/first-world-war/>

Rediscovering First World War collections

Jonathan Wheeler, Curator of Modern History, St Fagans National History Museum

Since late 2012, with the centenary of the First World War in mind, curators at St Fagans have been involved in a project to digitize objects with relevance to the conflict. The results are on the First World War database, which you can see on our website. Now, in 2016, the project is still very much ongoing. One aspect that has surprised everyone involved is that objects with stories to tell about the war are still being rediscovered.

Before we began looking specifically for these objects, their potential to reveal stories about the conflict had not always been realized, and connections between objects not always made. Huge numbers of objects were often collected in the past - some in the years immediately following the war - meaning that the information recorded at the time was often limited. Sometimes, however, a little bit of luck

has helped. As part of the Making History project, thousands of items from the collection have moved between storerooms and conservation labs. While auditing an area containing military and civilian uniforms, I recently found a collection of badges and buttons of relevance to the period, taking the extent of our First World War collections beyond what we had previously realized.

As artefacts of war, these objects often have poignant associations. One lapel



Badge inscribed 'FOR KING AND EMPIRE SERVICES RENDERED GRI', with a portrait of Vincent Haydon Handley.



badge was recently found complete with a tiny photograph of a soldier who was killed in 1915. A shoulder badge and button of the Grenadier Guards were found belonging to a soldier who was involved in the retreat from Mons in 1914, and of whom there is also a photograph in our collections. We have also discovered objects from areas of the conflict previously thought to be unrepresented in the collections, such as this South Wales Borderers cap badge commemorating the Egyptian campaign.

The exciting aspect of working on this project has been the discovery of collections not previously categorized by their First World War associations. We have uncovered objects in a variety of areas: among pictures and photographs, letters and certificates, medical equipment, textiles, badges and medals. Not only can these items be seen on our First World War database, but some of the stories we have discovered will be told within the displays planned for the new galleries at St Fagans – Wales Is... and Life is... – a perfect example of enabling the full richness of our collections to be permanently shared.

The Armed Forces Community Covenant Grant Fund awarded £250k to Amgueddfa Cymru in April 2014 for a 5 year project at St Fagans to redisplay the Armed Forces collections and for community outreach. This remains the largest grant the covenant has given in Wales. The St Fagans project was recently profiled on Armed Forces Day as a key project in Wales, and Brigadier Gamble spoke of how important it is in helping to make the army more relevant and integrated in Wales today.

Brigadier Martyn Gamble, Commander 160th Infantry Brigade and Headquarters Wales and head of the Army in Wales, said: "These kinds of projects carry great value in ensuring generations of all ages can tap into the

stories of our forebears and it's very pleasing to see how the Covenant Fund has helped shape this particular project.

"The Community Covenant Grant scheme was set up in June 2013 to fund local projects which strengthen the ties, or the mutual understanding, between members of the Armed Forces Community and the wider community in which they live.

"The First World War is an event of immeasurable significance and in so many ways shaped the early decades of the 20th Century. We must never forget the sacrifices made and our annual remembrance services allow us to reflect on those sacrifices. By digitising objects that have relevance to the conflict people can gain a deeper understanding of the myriad stories which have evolved over time.

"The very ethos of the Covenant Scheme is to bind communities, to integrate, appreciate and also understand the Armed Forces.

"The work St Fagans has done, and continues to do, is fascinating, insightful and allows us to peer through vivid modern windows into the past."

Elen Phillips, Principal Curator Contemporary & Community History said:

"Working with the Armed Forces community has been a springboard to give new life to objects which have been in the collection for generations. Working in partnership has bought new stories and meanings to light, making the collections more relevant and accessible. It's been a learning experience for Museum staff and hopefully for the members of the Armed Forces with whom we have worked to-date. We are looking forward to further developing our relationship with the Armed Forces community over the next three years".



Cap badge of the South Wales Borderers.



Shoulder badge and button from the uniform worn by Corporal Oscar Foote of the Grenadier Guards during the retreat from Mons, 1914.



War: What is it good for?

Victoria le Poidevin, Events and Marketing Officer, National Roman Legion Museum

With the current commemorations of the centenary for the First World War, the futility of fighting is a recurrent theme. The group at the National Roman Legion Museum putting together the exhibition programme for the period 2014-18 decided to try and look at the issue from a different perspective. The song says *War, what is it good for? Absolutely nothing* – but is that true? War might be brutal and futile, but can anything good come out of it?



The exhibition team decided to concentrate on the lessons that have been learnt from war, especially concentrating on the Roman period and the First World War. They chose to concentrate on

medical advancements that came about as a result of war and several months of research resulted in enough exciting and interesting material to produce an exhibition.

Creating an exhibition at the National Roman Legion Museum has its own unique set of challenges, the main one being the size of the display area. 'Compact' might be one way of describing it! As with every exhibition the challenge is that there's always more knowledge to share with visitors than space to display it. The exhibition boards show fairly basic information; this is because visitor feedback shows again and again that the average visitor prefers simple, to-the-point information. But there are also people who would like more detail about the subject and objects. In previous exhibitions the teams have produced flip books or similar traditional methods to layer information.

The project leader for *War, What is it good for?* was Danielle Cowell, Learning Manager at the National Roman Legion Museum and digital champion for Amgueddfa Cymru. It was her digital experience that led to the idea of creating an iBook to accompany the exhibition. Although iBooks have been used before (for example one was created recently at St Fagans as part of a First World War project) this is the first time they have been used in such an integral way in an exhibition.

The premise is simple. The display boards show a timeline of medical advancement from the Greeks through to modern wars. The iBook has a copy of this timeline on its first page, but visitors are able to access additional information about the advancements by clicking into the images on the timeline. There are also links for visitors to access information through the medium of Welsh or English as they prefer. So, for example, the information on Greek warfare on the timeline tells visitors about forceps that were invented to remove arrow heads about 2,500 BC. Link through on the iBook to find more information about the forceps as well as a talking head of Hippocrates, using the app 'Morpho', explaining how war is the only way to learn about medicine.

The early response to the exhibition has been very positive and visitors have been inspired by the displays to learn more. It is hoped that we, in turn, will learn a lot from these new approaches to our exhibitions spaces.

The exhibition runs until 16 January 2017 at the National Roman Legion Museum, Caerleon.

Museum News

Lambing at St Fagans National History Museum

It's been another busy lambing season down at Llwyn yr Eos – we really hope you've enjoyed watching all the action via #lambcam. This year, as well as welcoming lots of excited visitors to the farm to see our mums and babies, there's been a couple of new additions to the programme. We ran our first ever Lambing Experience Day Courses and were really pleased to get great feedback that included 'a once in a lifetime experience'! They're something we hope to build on in 2017 - so watch this space!. Our Learning Team also organised lambing tours for schools, with over 600 children visiting (some of whom were lucky enough to witness births happening!).



The lamb-o-meter clocked up 186 at close of play – there's a few stragglers left to deliver, but we're on course for a total of 204 births.

Portrait of Catrina Hooghsaet (1607-1685)

Rembrandt van Rijn's Portrait of Catrina Hooghsaet (1607-1685) can be seen at National Museum Cardiff for a period of three years.

The 17th-century portrait of a wealthy, independent, 50 year-old woman from Amsterdam was housed at Penrhyn Castle in North Wales until last year, when a private collector bought the work through Sotheby's auction house.

It has now been offered to National Museum Cardiff as a long-term loan and will be shown at the city centre national museum in its historic art galleries. The Museum will also benefit from a donation of £10k from the previous owner of the painting, to fund an educational programme.

The work was painted by one of the most outstanding figures in the history of art. It is one of Rembrandt's best portraits, and indeed one of the finest examples of his work in Britain.



Rembrandt, through his work, had the ability to portray people as real human beings with character and emotion. Portraiture before his time was about status rather than personality. He painted with an honesty which revealed true individuals with immense sensitivity and insight.

The sitter herself was part of the Mennonite religious community in

Amsterdam, but her parrot, which is portrayed in the work, and fine clothing reveal unconventional attitudes. She was unusual for her time in the fact that although she was married to a Mennonite preacher, they lived separately. Therefore, she must have been strongly independent, to sustain such an unconventional living arrangement, both in character and financially.

David Anderson, Director General, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales said:

“This is a very special work of art, which has great meaning and importance for Wales’ heritage. The painting

came to Wales in the 1860s and is an example, not only of money, but of the cultural wealth generated by the great industrial age in Wales.

“I am delighted it will be made publicly accessible, and deservedly so, so that it can contribute to our understanding of our past and be enjoyed by today’s visitors.”

The owner of the painting added:

“I am very happy to be able to share the enjoyment of this great painting with the public by lending it to the National Museum of Wales.”

The sounds of battle will ring at St Fagans in May as a truly realistic re-enactment of the Battle of St Fagans takes place:

Today, the village of St Fagans with its popular museum, quaint houses, thatched roofs and village pub is a serene and beautiful spot, but the village was once witness to the largest skirmish ever to take place on Welsh soil.



In May 1648, 11,000 men met here in bloody battle. The Parliamentary army crushed the Royalists and it is said that the river Ely ran red with the blood of the fallen as more than 700 Glamorganshire men fell on the battlefield.

In 2016, visitors to St Fagans National History Museum can once again experience the clash of swords, the shouts of men and the smell of gun

smoke. Join us on **28-29th May 2016** for “The Battle”, a re-enactment event in collaboration with the English Civil War Society.

Your ticket will allow you access to a unique large-scale living history event:

- Find out what life was like for a 17th century soldier.
- Speak to the villagers to hear their fears and thoughts.
- Experience the nervous apprehension of soldiers preparing for battle. See replica weapons including cannons, muzzle-loading gunpowder-firing muskets, swords and billhooks.
- Listen to the commanders mustering their troops for battle
- Marvel at the skillful horse riders challenging the opposing troops and be witness to the sort of conflict that took place when these two forces met on the Field of Battle

28 & 29 May 2016, 6pm-9pm
Adults £10, Children (Under 16) £5
To book:
ticketlineuk.com/event/st-fagans
 or call (029) 2023 0130.



Topping Out Ceremony

On 4 February, staff, donors and visitors gathered at St Fagans National History Museum to mark the topping out of the Main Building.

The event was an opportunity to celebrate the progress made so far as St Fagans prepares for the thousands of additional visitors the Museum will be able to accommodate once building work is complete.

Photographs and the ceremonial placing of the flag atop the Main Building were followed by speeches, delivered by Deputy Minister Ken Skates, Director General David Anderson and Ted Sangster from principal project funder the HLF. Visitors were then able to meet the project team and receive a site tour as part of a series of Tools Down Days

Wool Museum wins Tourism Award

Massive congratulations to the National Wool Museum who scooped the Silver Award for Best Day Out at the Carmarthenshire Tourism Awards.

The Museum also received a brand new award by Visit Wales, **Best Told Story**, in recognition of excellence in

conveying the magical story of the woollen industry in Wales.

The **Best Told Story** award is for attractions that make an exceptional effort to create an enjoyable and memorable experience for their visitors.

Christmas Tree Challenge at the National Slate Museum!



The National Slate Museum's quarrymen gave themselves a challenge last Christmas – to build a Christmas tree made of slate! Our north Wales museum wanted to do something a little bit different and this became a perfect opportunity to showcase the exceptional talents of our quarrymen.

The finished product took three weeks to complete, had roughly 150 layers and 2,360 pieces of slate, and was made from three types of slate (from Penrhyn, Cwty Bugail Ffestiniog and Blaenau). The tree weighed in at an impressive 1.2 tonnes!

The tree was so popular that the Museum decided to keep it in situ all year at the front entrance. Its Christmas theme has now been transformed into a seasonal attraction that so far has included both St Valentine's Day and St David's Day!



Volunteering

Broadening the socio-economic range of volunteers

Amgueddfa Cymru was one of seven museums and galleries participating in the Our Museum initiative funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation between 2012 and 2015.

The aim was to facilitate a process of development and organizational change with museums committed to active partnership with their communities, with the ambition of affecting the museum sector more widely.

Amgueddfa Cymru's work has been centred at St Fagans and focused on volunteering. We aimed to diversify the volunteer base and improve the volunteer experience by implementing a process of cultural change around skills development and working practices.

In 2012 St Fagans had just eleven volunteers, all of whom volunteered in just one department. "These volunteers generally came from the same socio-economic background: being well-educated, retired and female," says Stephanie Burge, Our Museum Co-ordinator. "Our recruitment process was itself a barrier: minimal advertising that only appeared on our website, overly complicated application forms and a longwinded and bureaucratic interviewing procedure were unintentionally off-putting.

"Over the course of the programme the team made significant changes, bringing the volunteering programme in line with best practice and updating recruitment and policies, making volunteering opportunities accessible and more widely visible.

"In peak summer months we now have upwards of 150 volunteers across

departments at St Fagans," says Steph. "Through partnership working we accessed previously unused community networks, giving us greater reach that has diversified our volunteer base.

This model has also been transferred to the way the Museum supports staff to supervise volunteers. Community Partners have helped deliver training that provides staff with the skills, knowledge and confidence to work with people from diverse backgrounds and with different needs; this includes training in disability awareness and in supporting people recovering from substance misuse.

"All of these changes have culminated in Amgueddfa Cymru achieving Investing in Volunteers, which is the UK quality standard for good practice in volunteer management," she says. "When we chose to focus on transforming our volunteering offer, we recognised that we didn't have the knowledge or experience needed to do it alone. We viewed this as a positive. We wanted to bring in external voices, so we created an Engagement Team made up of ten Community Partners."

The partners were charities, public and third sector organizations chosen because of their specialist knowledge, strategic remit and community, such as NewLink Wales, a charity that supports people recovering from substance misuse.

"We also realised that we would benefit from employing staff with different skills. We worked collaboratively with Community Partners to recruit a new co-ordinator for the Our Museum programme."

The co-ordinator role was advertised through Community Partners, making it visible to different groups of people, which created a greater diversity of applicants. "We took an egalitarian approach to the shortlisting and interviewing, with Community Partners involved throughout," says Steph. "An informal site tour was added to the interview process, which gave candidates more opportunities to sell themselves and gave us the ability to see candidates engaging with different people in different environments."



We appointed a candidate whose background was working for a volunteering centre. They had significant experience in working with diverse communities and the skills needed to support Amgueddfa Cymru to align its volunteering offer with best practice models from the third sector.

Across Amgueddfa Cymru there are now more than 300 volunteers and the skills they learn are very different, dependent on their volunteering role. For example, a volunteer on the farm in St Fagans will learn animal husbandry and agricultural skills; volunteering with the Conservation Department in the National

Collections Centre teaches participants about collection care and archiving, and helping in the Learning Department in the National Roman Legion Museum increases planning and facilitation skills.

"All of our volunteering roles give participants the chance to improve their softer skills such as communication, team working, and time keeping, helping towards future employability. Many of the volunteering roles also offer opportunities for volunteers to practice their Welsh language skills."

Several volunteers have progressed into employment within Amgueddfa Cymru or with other heritage and cultural organisations. "Many of our volunteers also go on to further education in areas such as history and the arts," says Burge. Amgueddfa Cymru has also created work placement programmes, which are designed for students and graduates. The next step is to continue working with Community Partners to create a supported pathway for young people, including those that may never have visited a museum, to become engaged with heritage through volunteering or a work placement.

"We plan to work with organizations that support young people, so that what we design meets their needs and aspirations; for example by working with Llamau, a charity that helps homeless and vulnerable young people in Wales," says Burge. "Younger people are an under-represented audience within the heritage sector, so it's important to use the cultural capacity of the museum to develop meaningful opportunities, which not only connects them with heritage but also builds transferable skills for life."

This article is from an interview with Stephanie Burge published in February 2016 edition of *Museums & Heritage Advisor*.

Research, Conservation and Curatorial News

Two Heads are Better than One: Conserving a memorial embroidery sampler.

A joint project between Lisa Childs, Senior Conservator, Archives and Kim Thusing, Senior Conservator, Textiles

This article describes the conservation of one of the items selected from the collections at St Fagans for display in Gweithdy, the new building currently under construction as part of the St Fagans redevelopment.

It is an embroidered memorial sampler dated 1885, carried out in cross-stitch using silk thread. The ground is not textile but is made from card punched through with a gridwork of holes, through which the embroidery is worked.

As the sampler is made from both textile and paper elements this has given us an opportunity to tackle its conservation as a cross-disciplinary project, drawing on our respective expertise in both textile and paper conservation.



The sampler had been badly mounted in the past, having been adhered directly to a rigid card backing. This has been partly responsible for causing splits in the card ground as the unevenly applied adhesive restricted its natural expansion and contraction through changes in environmental humidity levels.

Our aim was to remove the sampler from the old backing and support it more successfully by mounting it on a padded board, ready for framing and display in the new gallery.

Early attempts to remove the sampler from its backing by softening the adhesive with solvents were quickly abandoned, as they caused the card to either discolour or disintegrate. Instead, the Paper Conservator turned the object face down and removed the backing layer by layer using a scalpel, a time-consuming but far safer way to proceed.

Once the backing was removed it became obvious that the object was badly fragmented, necessitating its repair using Japanese conservation paper applied to the back. The repair paper was then trimmed away from every hole in the card so that it could not be seen when viewed from the front.

Finally, after completion of the repairs to the card, the object was mounted on to a padded board covered with a fabric dyed to the same colour as the punched card. The Textile Conservator wanted to avoid placing any stitches in the area of the sampler itself in order to avoid the needle puncturing the card, so instead it is now held by a semi-transparent overlay of dyed Nylon net, which is stretched over the sampler and stitched around its perimeter.

Windows – Abernodwydd Farmhouse

Emyr Davies, Senior Conservator,
Furniture



This is the mixture being melted before application to the stretched fabric of the windows.



A window in Abernodwydd open to the elements before fitting the oil treated stretched linen frames.



This is the same window after the treated linen was put in place.

The environmental issues of heat loss, wind ingress and humidity control at the historic properties at St Fagans have recently been under the spotlight. As conservators we wanted to find a way to introduce environmental control into some structures where, for historical reasons, the buildings were not fitted with window glass

Before plate glass and crown glass were available, affordable or practical, people used natural materials such as horn, parchment, vellum or linen to keep out inclement weather yet at the same time maximize the translucency of the material to light. This was invariably achieved through the application of a mixture of oil and resins in a solvent. This mixture would saturate the material in order to weatherproof it and assist in the passage of light.

Experiments were made using traditional recipes for the window coverings. Contemporary reports using these recipes mention problems with light transfer due to the opacity of the mixture. The curing time for the mixture is approximately four weeks.

The traditional recipe we used seemed fine until the tallow was added, which tended to impart an opacity to the mix. The tallow appeared to block light instead of allowing its transfer. Therefore samples were made without the tallow, and consequently every mix cured successfully and achieved a range of transparency depending on the strength. (This type of 'sabotage' of a recipe was a common factor within workshops and helped to safeguard a process or knowledge within a trade or guild.) The mix had to be applied hot to the stretched linen and allowed to cool.

The surprising effect of these stretched linen window frames was that the level of light diffused into the buildings actually increased, not decreased as was expected. This was illustrated through taking digital lux readings at different points in the room before and after introducing the frames. These readings highlight a forgotten benefit of this type of window covering – a better quality of natural light at the darkest point of the year. Different densities of resin were used on different windows to provide a broad understanding of the effect of the mix on light levels and durability.



Through request by front of house staff, these window films have now been applied to a Cilewent Farmhouse, with plans for a third building later in the year. From an interpretation perspective the window films have helped to return the two farmhouses to a more 'liveable' condition while also helping to take better care of the displayed collections within.

The antiquity of this process of weather protection is exemplified even in the Roman language, where the word pane, derived from the word pannus, means 'stretched cloth'. In more recent history, letters and records also exist of settlers in the far west of America using linen and resin coverings for their windows before the availability of glass, which came later with the establishment of the railways

Voices of the Vulcan – Filming Oral Histories

Fflur Gwynn,
Senior Curator, Cultural Life

Many of our curators have been travelling the length and breadth of Wales co-producing audio-visual content for the new galleries at St Fagans.



Rhona and Mel Rees, landlords of the pub between 1983 and 1985.

My colleague Dafydd Wiliam and I recently began work on a new and exciting task, this time a little closer to home, a stone's throw away in Tremorfa.

Over the next few months our focus will be the Vulcan pub. We'll be conducting oral histories with former customers and landlords of the old Adamsdown pub, recording and filming their experiences and memories. The completed interviews will be edited into a short film, which will be displayed in one of the new galleries. But we also hope these memories will give us, as curators, a clearer picture of life at the Vulcan, its culture and its community.

Our first interviewees were Rhona and Mel Rees, landlords of the pub between 1983 and 1985. From the very beginning, it was clear that they were extremely fond of the pub and its

customers, and that they thoroughly enjoyed their time there. They described the pub as their living room, and the words cosy, friendly, and fun were regularly used. They had plenty of amusing and comic tales from the pub to tell, but they also touched on deeper themes, such as raising a family in a pub and the economic side of things and the decline of the trade. All in all it was an eye-opening interview, and we learnt much about their daily lives as landlords of the Vulcan in the 1980s.

My personal highlight of the interview was a story about a prank played on Mel's 50th birthday involving a kiss-o-gram visiting the Vulcan, but I won't give too much away now!

Mel and Rhona truly captured the atmosphere and character of the pub and its people, and I can't wait to go out again to meet and interview the people who knew this very special pub. If you or somebody you know has a story or object related to the Vulcan, we'd love to hear from you.

#MakingHistory #CreuHanes





International Research

Diatoms – studies on microscopic algae to monitor change in our environment

Ingrid Jüttner, Principal Curator,
Botany, Natural Sciences Department



Collecting diatoms in a stream on East Falkland.



Stream on Pebble Island and diatom species of the genus *Pinnularia*.



Pond on East Falkland and diatom species of the genus *Surirella*.



Thonak Tsho, Gokyo Valley, Everest National Park, Nepal, and a new diatom species in the genus *Achnantheidium* that we are describing for a new publication.

Diatoms are microscopic algae with a cell wall made of silica that grow in both freshwater and marine habitats. They are sensitive to many environmental factors including pollution and temperature and are especially useful for assessing water quality.

For over 23 years I have studied the biodiversity of these organisms in the Himalaya, from where I have collected over 1,000 samples – a collection that is now in Amgueddfa Cymru. The samples were from diverse river, lake, pond and spring habitats; from subtropical lowlands to alpine tundra in mountains at altitudes of up to 4,840 metres. Some of the research was part of a collaborative project with Cardiff University and the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, and was funded by the UK Government as part of their Darwin Initiative. Other projects were part of a EU Marie Curie Fellowship at the Natural History Museum London, and some were carried out in collaboration with Kathmandu University, funded for example by the British Ecological Society and the World Wildlife Fund. These have included a study on high altitude lakes in the Everest National Park, and a new study is planned for 2016 on Rara Lake, the largest lake in the Nepalese Himalaya and an internationally recognised 'Ramsar' protected wetland.

As a result of this work eighteen new species and one new genus have been described, and several important genera in the Nepalese Himalaya have been revised (*Achnantheidium*,

cymbelloid genera, *Gomphonema*, *Odontidium*). My work has helped with the assessment of water quality in densely populated areas such as the Kathmandu Valley and the effects of land-use changes on freshwater habitats. Two lecturers at the two Kathmandu universities completed their PhDs based on studies of lakes and ponds in Nepal.

The international recognition of my work at Amgueddfa Cymru on Himalayan diatoms has resulted in me being involved in a number of other prestigious projects. Nearer to home, I was awarded several contracts looking at diatoms and water quality for the Wye and Usk Foundation, and for the Environment Agencies in Wales and Scotland. I am funded by the British Phycological Society (the largest European organization dealing with algae) to co-ordinate the Diatom Flora of Britain and Ireland, a web-based identification guide that will be the definitive tool for the morphological study of these organisms. Most recently I have teamed up with Professor Bart Van de Vijver (Botanic Garden Meise, Belgium) and Dr Roger Flower (University College London) to collaborate on an investigation of the diatoms of the Falkland Islands. The fieldwork for this last project (part funded through a Shackleton Scholarship) took place in November 2015 and has added substantially to the diatom collection at Amgueddfa Cymru. It also included the collection of live specimens that will support a molecular study on the genus *Pinnularia* by a PhD student of Professor Van de Vijver and Professor K. Sabbe (Ghent University, Belgium).

My publications are listed on:
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ingrid_Juettner/publications



Partnerships

Swamp Land: Brymbo 300 Million Years Ago

Caroline Buttler, Head of Palaeontology

On 28 January 2016 a new exhibition, Swamp Land: Brymbo 300 Million Years Ago, was opened at Wrexham County Borough Museum & Archives by Ken Skates, Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport & Tourism. It tells the story of the Brymbo Fossil Forest, near Wrexham, north Wales and was developed jointly by staff from the Natural Sciences Department at Amgueddfa Cymru and Wrexham Museum, with help from Brymbo Heritage Group and Brymbo Developments Ltd.

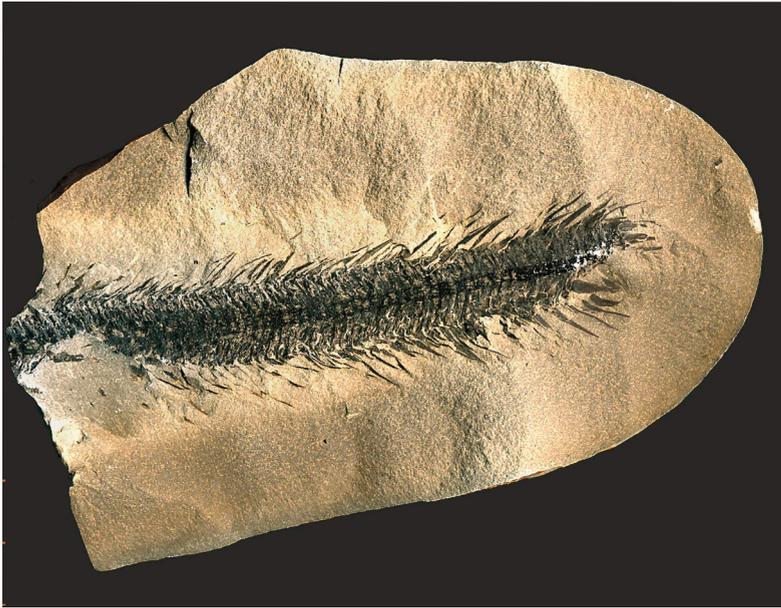


The exhibition shows a time in the Carboniferous Period, when Brymbo was a swamp situated in a river delta somewhere near the Equator. Giant insects hovered and flew among the monster plants that grew in a lush tropical environment. From time to time the muddy river broke its banks, flooding the surrounding land and by chance entombing the plants in position.

Brymbo Fossil Forest was discovered in 2004 during restoration of the site of the former Brymbo Steelworks. Large 'tree' stumps and numerous huge Calamites (horsetails) were found, most in growth position. Other beautifully preserved plant fossils including fern-like foliage, stems, cones, seeds and megaspores were uncovered. The fossils were all collected by the local Brymbo Heritage Group.

The importance of the geoconservation and scientific interest of the site was realised very early on, and Brymbo Fossil Forest was identified as an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest). The smaller specimens, with display or research potential, were temporarily stored in domestic premises - not an ideal solution! A permanent location had to be found for these specimens, including potential new species, in addition to a representative selection of fossils from the site. Ideally, this would have been located in north-east Wales but no organization there had the space or experience to deal with such a task. Amgueddfa Cymru had the facilities and expertise, and after careful discussions a memorandum of understanding was drawn up between us, Brymbo Heritage Group and Brymbo Developments Limited, the last being the site owners and hence the owners of the fossils. The result was a framework for co-operation between the three groups, enabling them to work in partnership to preserve specimens for future enjoyment, research and general educational purposes.

In 2013 the transfer of title to the selected fossils was signed and ownership passed to Amgueddfa Cymru. Identification, to species level in most cases, has been made by Chris Cleal, Head of Botany and Barry Thomas, Honorary Research Fellow. An exhibition was planned and although the material was stored in Cardiff it was agreed that it should



open in Wrexham to be seen first by the local community who were instrumental in saving the fossils. The star exhibit is a 2.25 metre high *Stigmaria* fossil – “Big Stig” – with a root span of 3.5 metres, which was rescued in pieces from the coal seam beneath the former steelworks site. This enormous fossil has been carefully conserved and re-assembled for the exhibition. Its size and weight, approximately one tonne, presented a range of conservation, logistic, and health and safety issues.



In the future, Brymbo Heritage Group hope to excavate the fossil area to expose plants and *Calamites* standing where they grew, with a protected boardwalk system for visitor access, all enclosed within a single structure. A heritage officer, funded by Heritage Lottery, has been appointed to develop and find funding opportunities for the group in conjunction with partner organizations and local communities.



DON'T FORGET – book your space for our super summer evening event at St Fagans on 8 June. Bring your friends and guests for this exclusive look at Llys Llywelyn in the company of staff and curators and become acquainted with life in a medieval court.

For further information on any of the articles published, our events programme (and to book a place), the St Fagans fundraising campaign or any of the news from this edition, please contact:

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Patrons Event Calendar 2016

Location/Date	Event
NMC Cardiff Thursday 28 April 6.00pm – 8.00pm	<p>'War's Hell!' – <i>The Battle of Mametz Wood in Art</i></p> <p>Private View and official launch for VIPs, Patrons and guests. This exhibition is a major highlight of the WW1 commemoration programme. It will show works from the museums own collections, including book plates by David Jones for his work <i>In Parenthesis</i> and works on loan including a painting originally in Cardiff Infirmary and now at Sandhurst. This prestigious event will feature a performance from <i>In Parenthesis</i>, the new WNO opera that opens in May at Wales Millennium Centre.</p>
Wales Millennium Centre Saturday 7 May 2.30pm – 4.30pm (tbc)	<p>WNO/NMW Event at Wales Millennium Centre Opportunity for 50 Patrons to attend a dress rehearsal of <i>In Parenthesis</i>. PLACES LIMITED - please book now by calling (029) 2057 3180 or by emailing patrons@museumwales.ac.uk</p>
St Fagans Wednesday 8 June From 6.00pm	<p>Patrons and Supporters Event – Llys Llywelyn with Dr Steve Burrow, Head of Historic Buildings and Janet Wilding, Head of the Historic Buildings Unit An event to see progress on Llys Llywelyn, and to launch the Llys Llywelyn Patrons Appeal, a shopping list of specially commissioned items for the fitting-out of the medieval court. This is an event for Patrons and other key donors and potential supporters of St Fagans. The evening will include supper in Oakdale.</p>
NMC Cardiff Saturday 18 June 9.00am – 10.00am	<p>Opening of the exhibition <i>Wriggle, Natural History</i> 18 June – January 2016 Family-friendly Private View – a VIP and children-friendly breakfast launch for guests and families. An exhibition to see and learn about the many varieties of worms that form part of our natural history collections, and how we use our research to demonstrate their individual traits and characteristics and their impact on the environment.</p>
NMC Cardiff Saturday 16 July 9.00am – 10.00am	<p>Opening of the exhibition <i>Quentin Blake: Inside Stories</i> 16 July – 20 November A display of the work of Quentin Blake and his famous collaboration with authors such as Roald Dahl and David Walliams. Family-friendly Private View – a VIP and children-friendly breakfast launch for guests and families.</p>
NMC Cardiff Wednesday 21 September 6.00pm – 8.00pm	<p>The Burges Vase Hosted by Andrew Renton, Keeper of Art and Matthew Williams AMA, Curator at Cardiff Castle A chance to see this extraordinary Tulip vase, designed by William Burges for Cardiff Castle in 1874, and recently acquired by the museum. Open to Patrons and invited guests.</p>
NMC Cardiff Thursday 8 December From 6.30pm	<p>Patrons and Supporters Christmas Event Annual dinner event for Patrons and guests</p>