

## From the Collection: *Distant View of Laugharne* (c.1932)

### An enquiry into the painting methods of Edward Morland Lewis (1903-1943)



Edward Morland Lewis *Distant View of Laugharne*  
(c.1932) oil on canvas 51 x 61cm  
© City & County of Swansea: Glynn Vivian Art Gallery Collection

So many talented Welsh artists from the past have 'slipped under the radar'. Whether this has been neglect by galleries, academics, media or the artists themselves lacking the drive to push their art is difficult to deduce. I must admit that the Carmarthenshire-born painter, Edward Morland Lewis was not known to me until an evening in the autumn 2001 when I visited a collector in Carmarthen to view some Evan Walters' drawings that he possessed. The conversation turned to many Welsh artists and he asked me if I was familiar with the work of Edward Morland Lewis. I had to confess ignorance and I rather shamefacedly followed him into his study where he pointed to the wall and there hung two small, rather beautiful landscape oil paintings by the said artist. I was rather taken aback as the pictures had a striking resemblance to the work of Walter Sickert and I mentioned this to the gentleman but he just smiled. Upon leaving his house I was enthused to find out more about Edward Morland Lewis but like all good intentions, events take over and I only sporadically dipped into the work of the artist.

Edward Morland Lewis was born in Carmarthen in 1903. His father, Benjamin, a gas engineer and known affectionately as "Lewis the Gas", was a talented amateur artist who painted many views in Carmarthenshire. Lewis' education took him from Carmarthen Grammar School to the Royal Academy Schools via the Carmarthen School of Arts and Crafts and the St. John's Wood School of Art. It was at the Royal Academy Schools, in 1924, that Lewis met the tutor and prestigious artist Walter Richard Sickert. The young artist obviously made an impression on Sickert because he took him on both as a private student and assistant. In 1930, Lewis was made a member of the London Artist's

Association and it was from the Association's 1932 exhibition that *Distant View of Laugharne* was purchased to become part of The Glynn Vivian's collection. Later in the 1930s Lewis became a tutor at the Chelsea School of Art where his colleagues included Henry Moore, Graham Sutherland and John Piper. In 1940 Lewis married Kathleen Fausset-Osbourne, a fellow painter. Unfortunately their marriage was short-lived. Lewis, serving as

Captain E. Morland Lewis, a camouflage officer in the Second World War in North Africa, contracted malaria and died there in 1943, aged 40.

In the past eighteen months I have started to paint again with renewed vigour and, surprisingly because I showed very little interest previously, I have taken up painting with oils, outdoors in all weather conditions. This new-found enthusiasm for landscape painting has led me back to Lewis for I have developed a passion for working in Ferryside, Llanstephan and Laugharne, all places that the artist loved. The Glynn Vivian owns five oil paintings by Lewis, namely *The Band Plays*; *Shandon Church*; *Lion Hotel and Castle, Pembroke*. However the two that interest me most are *The Beach (Ferryside)* and *Distant View of Laugharne*. I have painted in Laugharne on a couple of occasions and I was fascinated by Lewis' depiction of the 1930s Strand on the town's sea front.

On close inspection of *Distant view of Laugharne* it is evident that that the artist had 'squared up' the picture; that is he transferred the image from either a drawing or a photograph by way of a grid of pencil lines over the original image and the canvas. This method is centuries old and produces a very accurate image on the painting support. However, it is rather an odd way of producing landscape paintings in an impressionistic style but it can only be assumed that Lewis learnt this technique from Walter Sickert, who used the grid method extensively, combined with loose application of paint, when he copied from photographs. It is recorded that Lewis was an accomplished photographer and all the evidence points to him using a photograph for this painting.

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*Distant View of Laugharne* depicts high tide on the Strand, probably in late summer, and judging by the way the light falls on the central white house the time of day is probably around noon. The oil colours likely to have been used were: titanium white, chrome yellow, cadmium red, French ultramarine, Prussian blue, yellow ochre, burnt sienna, burnt umber, raw sienna and raw umber. This is a fairly standard, if limited palette that was used, with some minor changes by many plein air painters of this period. Why such a limited palette? Well the basic idea is that by using limited colours the artist would achieve a pleasing overall tonal effect without the display of anything too strident. Green is the bane of the impressionist painter so most artists mixed, and still do today, their own various shades. The paint would have been applied, in the main, with hog's hair brushes.

The pale ochre ground is just visible in the lower section of the original. This is quite an unusual ground for Lewis as most of his pictures had a reddish pink ground which gives the picture a hint of warmth. The picture depicts four

distinct compositional bands namely the foreground which is coarse grass, the second band is water, the third band is the house and trees on the strand and lastly, the sky. This is a traditional compositional device and used by many artists in the past; have a look at Vermeer's *View of Delft* (c.1660- 1661) for a famous example of compositional 'banding' in a painting.

The overall effect is an effective composition that transports the viewer back to the tranquil calm of early 1930s Laugharne. Despite my reservations of the grid method for producing impressionistic pictures I have to admit Lewis has made a memorable image that perfectly captures that warm summer's day. I would strongly recommend you take some time to seek out the pictures of Edward Morland Lewis; they are certainly worth the effort. An added bonus for all the fans of Dylan Thomas is that the poet was best man at Lewis' wedding!

© Barry Plummer 2015

## Friends News

### Art, Friends and Conversation

The Friends are looking to start an informal art discussion group. The group would operate in a similar manner to a book club with the members discussing individual exhibitions or selected artworks from the G.V. collection. The aim is to create a friendly, social and relaxed atmosphere to talk about art. It is anticipated that the group would meet every other month, with members taking turns to select artworks to discuss. Initially, we are looking for individuals who would be interested in joining the group. If Art, Friends and Conversation sounds like something for you, please contact Daniel Trivedy via e-mail to register your interest [trivedyd@gmail.com](mailto:trivedyd@gmail.com) or leave a message on mobile 07738 378839.

### Trip to The Royal West of England Academy, Bristol

We are planning a visit by coach to the Royal West of England Academy in Bristol on Friday September 4th 2015. Alison Bevan, the Director of the RWA, is a former employee of the Glynn Vivian, has a special affection for the Gallery and will be delighted to welcome the Friends and give an introductory talk. At the time of our visit, the RWA has two summer shows, 'Into the Fields: The Newlyn School and Other Artists', and 'Kate MccGwire and Peter Randall-Page' two sculptors. The exhibitions celebrate Bristol's European Green Capital status. Further information on these exhibitions can be found on the RWA's website [www.rwa.org.uk/home/](http://www.rwa.org.uk/home/)

The visit will include a welcome cup of coffee/tea, a talk, a tour of the exhibitions and lunch at the Gallery's café, Papadeli. Lunch will consist of bowls of crisps and olives, ramekins of hummus, Hobbs bread and olive oil, platters with a selection of food (frittatas, quiches, various types of salads, artisan cheese, Italian and Spanish charcuterie, red onion marmalade, etc) tea/ coffee and cakes. The cost for the day trip will be £30 which includes entrance, coffee/tea, lunch and coach. If time allows we might try and slip in a visit to the nearby Clifton Cathedral, a modernist building of architectural interest. We anticipate leaving at 8am and returning by 6pm. If you would like to join us please contact me, details below. We use a twenty-five seater coach so please book early.

### Art Fund Cards

Few Friends take advantage of our two corporate Art Fund cards. I would like to remind Friends of the advantages of borrowing them, which includes reduced price to many of the major exhibitions and free entry to a number of galleries throughout Britain. Friends can borrow these cards free of charge, please contact me for details.

### email Database

After many years of administering the Friends email database, Maurice Whitehead is leaving Swansea to take up a post in Rome. The Friends are very grateful for Maurice's hard work and we send all good wishes for the future and a happy and successful career in Rome.

If you have a change of email address or would like to receive emails from the Friends please contact me.

### New Friends

A warm welcome is extended to Louise Burston of Burry Port, Dr. Gillian Muston of Rhosilli and Martin Williams of West Cross, Swansea. We hope to see you at our talks and Events. If any Friends know a friend who they think would be interested in joining, please contact me and I will forward an application form.

### Ex Friends

The Friends were sad to learn of the deaths of longstanding friends Nancy Mascetti of Swansea, Hilary Lewis of Birchgrove and Iris Williams of Bishopston. We extend our sympathies to their families.

Ms Brigid Haines, Mr Nicholas Davies and Mr Stephen Jones have decided not to renew their membership, and we thank them for their interest in the Friends in the past.

### Increase in Membership Fees

As many of you know the membership fee increase became effective for the membership year starting September 2014. Membership now stands at £15 for single membership and £20 for two people at the same address. Many members have forgotten to increase their standing orders and consequently are £5 in arrears. I should be grateful if you would forward a cheque for £5 to cover the increase and amend your standing order in readiness for Sept. 1st 2015.

### Twitter and Facebook

We now have both a Twitter and a Facebook presence. Please follow us on Twitter @FriendsGlynnViv and 'like' our Facebook page Friends of the Glynn Vivian. It is a great source of keeping up-to-date with events and news.

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## Wakelin Award 2014: Clare Woods



(fig.1) Clare Woods *Stumpery II* 2010 watercolour on paper 153 x 153cm.  
© City & County of Swansea: Glynn Vivian Art Gallery Collection

the landscape, but instead walked through woods, fields and hills in the Welsh marches, to experience the environment through all her senses; its scent, atmosphere, temperature, colour and texture. She also researched the history and folklore of a locality. The works were then created back in her studio, using both photographic references and memory to make works which the artist instilled with extraordinary presence, atmosphere and history. It is this approach that provides her work with such a distinctive and unique vision.



(fig.2) Clare Woods *Untitled* 2009 watercolour on paper 76.5 x 57cm  
© City & County of Swansea: Glynn Vivian Art Gallery Collection

I was very pleased and honoured to be invited by The Friends of the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery to select the 2014 Wakelin Award purchase prize. Looking back over previous years, the artists who had been selected for the Award represent a really strong group of Welsh artists of excellence, and I was mindful of the responsibility that rested with my decision on which artist to propose. After thinking carefully I took the decision to select Clare Woods. I have been a strong admirer of Clare's work for a number of years. She is a very powerful and important artist whose paintings have extraordinary presence. At the time that I was invited to select the Wakelin Award, my gallery was also working closely with the artist in preparation for her new solo show *A Tree A Rock A Cloud*, co-curated by Mandy Fowler and Oriel Davies' Curator, Alex Boyd Jones. During the period of preparation for her show Clare introduced me to a wide body of her work, including a collection of superb watercolours the artist had made based upon the landscape of the Welsh borderlands, where she works. Knowing that the excellent art collection at the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery has a strong focus upon Welsh landscape, I felt that Clare's vibrant works and her very contemporary approach to landscape would be a valuable and relevant addition to the gallery's collection that would provide pleasure and interest for future generations from and beyond Swansea.

The large-scale watercolour, *Stumpery II*, (2010) (fig.1), is the piece selected for the Wakelin Award and is an extraordinarily compelling artwork. Its distinctive composition, fluid forms and vibrant colours present the viewer with an image of a landscape which, whilst recognizable, also presents a wonderful abstraction of form. I feel it is an excellent example of the artist's work. When creating this piece, Clare's approach to landscape painting was rooted in her physical interaction with specific places. She did not paint directly in front of

I am delighted that in addition to gaining *Stumpery II* as the Wakelin Award purchase, the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery has also been able to acquire two further watercolours by Clare Woods, created by the artist around the same period (figs.2 and 3). (The purchase being funded by Arts Council England/Victoria and Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund, and the Friends of the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery). In taking these works, the Glynn Vivian has now been able to add a powerful body of work by an artist who is of strong and growing significance, both in Wales and internationally.



(fig.3) Clare Woods *Untitled* 2009 watercolour on paper 57 x 76.5cm  
© City & County of Swansea: Glynn Vivian Art Gallery Collection

I offer my warmest thanks to the Friends of the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery for providing me with the opportunity for selecting the Wakelin Award for 2014.

© Amanda Farr  
2015, Artistic Director,  
Oriol Davies Gallery

## Glenys Cour Painting – Fundraising Raffle and Gower Festival

I was really delighted to win Glenys' kind gift of her painting, *Petite Landscape*, in the Friends' fundraising raffle 2014 and since then I have enjoyed daily pleasure from seeing it in my lounge.



Glenys Cour presenting *Petite Landscape* to Valerie Beynon on December 10th 2014 at the Dynevor Centre, Swansea  
© photo. Malcolm Hill

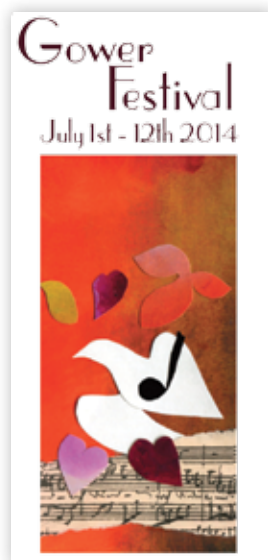
I wanted the Friends to know that I was especially pleased to have won the painting since I am involved with the Gower Music Festival and Glenys, who is also a very good friend of our Festival, gave us the design for the 2014

publicity which is illustrated. Many who attended the concerts commented on the strong and colourful composition which is Glenys' hallmark. An enlarged copy was signed by Glenys, framed and presented to local and international composer Karl Jenkins when he gave a concert in Penclawdd to celebrate his 70th Birthday. We had the best Gower Festival for many years and the painting will now also remind me of the good associations with 2014 and Glenys' work.

There is an event in the 2015 Gower Festival programme which might be of interest to Friends of the Glynn Vivian. Our lecture this year on Friday 3rd July at 7.30pm in Pennard Community Hall is on *The Lute in Western Art*. This will be given by Simon Rees who is likely to be known to some of the Friends for his lively and informed pre-performance talks before Welsh National Opera evenings.

Just a thought, if you are planning to attend events in Gower Festival 2015.

© Valerie Beynon 2015



Glenys Cour design for Gower Festival Programme 2015  
© photo. John Ganz

## The 100 Club 2014-2015

The club finally reached 95 members last year which meant that a contribution of £700 was passed on to The Friends in addition to prizes being won by some lucky contributors.

Since the last report the winners were:-

December	number	01	H.M. Mckenzie	£25
		72	M.B. Jones	£10
January		73	M.B. Jones	£25
		69	H.& K. Dunthorne	£10
February		67	E.G. Coyle	£25
		44	H. Zienkiewicz	£10
March		50	E. Fussell	£25
		12	J.A. Walker	£10
April		34	E.M.H Jones	£25
		56	R. Taylor	£10

It is pleasing to announce that Muriel Clement, number 46, won the annual prize of £100!

It is now time to consider joining the 100 club for the next session. In fact we already have 23 subscriptions, so hurry up, there are only 77 numbers left!

The profits are always put to good use to support the work of the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery. Please help us to run a successful 100 Club once again this year. Application Forms are available from me, can be downloaded from the Website or can be found in the AGM mailing.

Good Luck in future draws.

© Hilary Rose, 100 Club Promoter

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## Friends of the Glynn Vivian Event

### Afternoon Cream Tea at Sketty Hall on May 20th 2015

It seems appropriate that The Friends should have an event at Sketty Hall, as this Georgian mansion was the home of Richard Glynn Vivian in his final years.



Sketty Hall, Swansea

As many of you will know, the originator of 'afternoon tea' as a British meal was Anna Maria Russell, Duchess of Bedford. She was a lifelong friend of Queen Victoria, and entertained the Queen at her country house, Woburn Abbey, in 1841. During the 18th century, dinner was served later and later in the day, until by the early 19th century it was normally served between 7 and 8.30pm. The Duchess used to get very peckish, and hence created the meal of afternoon tea to assuage her hunger pangs. It became fashionable, and other hostesses followed suit.

Interestingly, the Duchess lived from 1783 until 1857, and this period coincided with the artistic movement known as Romanticism. The movement validated intense emotion as an aesthetic experience, especially emotions such as apprehension, horror and awe, particularly when experiencing untamed nature. It elevated folk art, ancient custom, and medievalism to desirable characteristics in art. It harnessed the power of imagination to escape the recent phenomenon of population growth, urban sprawl and industrialisation.

We thought it would be novel for Friends to bring along their favourite work from the Romantic era, and discuss it with guests at their table over afternoon tea. Maybe a print of a Goya or Turner (or the original if you're very lucky), a poem by Keats or Shelley, a novel by The Brontes, or a CD, iPod or iPad recording of Berlioz or Chopin perhaps?

We did think of fancy dress, but worried that a Friend may arrive as *Liberty Leading the People* by Delacroix!



Anna Maria Russell, Duchess of Bedford

© Russ Harris 2015

For further details please contact Russ Harris, Tel. 01792 421670 or Email russcharles.harris@ntlworld.com

The cost of afternoon tea, which includes tea, sandwiches and cakes (if you eat enough you won't need dinner ...) is £10.95 per person.

Please make cheques payable to FOGVAG, enclose a stamped addressed envelope, and send to -

**Russ Harris, 11 Coed Mor, Sketty, Swansea, SA2 8BQ**

I will send you an admission ticket(s). Please send payment by 13th May

## The visual culture of south Wales since 1910

A Three-Part Survey based on the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery collections by Ceri Thomas (author copyright 2014) – a version of the public lecture given in Swansea on 17 April 2014

### Part Three (1980-2014): 'Our' Art Scene

**ERRATUM:** The printed text should have read as follows:-

The ending of the millennium was a turning point. 1999 saw the inauguration of the National Assembly for Wales in Cardiff and the arrival in Swansea of the Port Talbot-born Jenni Spencer-Davies as curator of

the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery. She had served as the last head of Oriol, the gallery space in Cardiff which the Welsh Arts Council had opened in 1974 and which closed down in 1994. Over the last fifteen years, she has been implementing her ambitious plans to: "redevelop the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery building to meet the needs of our 21st century audiences" and "increase participation and engagement with the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery collections, exhibitions and learning programmes in a local, national and international context for Swansea and Wales".

© Ceri Thomas 2015

## The Visual Culture of the Co-operative Movement in South Wales



(fig.1) Isaac Price *Co-operation* c.1947/8  
Mural painted in Mid Rhondda Co-operative Society Hall, Tonypanydy  
Image courtesy of Roger Davies

### Part I: Ike Price and the Mid Rhondda Society Murals

There is a strong tradition of visual culture in the co-operative and labour movements. Emblems of trades unions and friendly societies, commemorative plates, mugs, badges and posters communicate and confirm identity as well as reinforce values and principles. These and other artefacts have also been used by co-operative societies to convey confidence in their businesses. The role of banners has long been appreciated in the trades union movement, though those of individual co-operative societies are now largely lost. The banners of Women's Co-operative Guild branches seem more likely to have survived, although examples are few in Wales. The use of murals as a visual form is the rarest. Indeed there is little record of mural making in British co-operation (or in the labour movement more generally). The murals painted in the Mid Rhondda Co-operative Society Hall in Tonypanydy by Isaac Rhys 'Ike' Price, likely to date from the 1940s, were outstanding exceptions.

The co-operative movement had a strong and vibrant culture which extended beyond shops and services to include education classes, libraries, publications, theatre groups and youth clubs. Mid Rhondda was part of a movement in South Wales which in 1950 had approximately 270,000 members in societies stretching from Pembroke Dock in the west to Chepstow in the east. The Mid Rhondda Society was formed in 1902 when the Clydach Vale, Mardy, and Porth and District Co-operative Societies came together. In 1950 the Society had 10,700 members and a network of 16 shops from Clydach Vale to Porth in the Rhondda Fawr and along the length of the Rhondda Fach. The Mid Rhondda Society's world was centred on its main stores and the co-operative hall in Gilmour Street, Tonypanydy, with Price's murals on its internal pine-end walls.

Price was born, the son of a collier, in 1921 in Zion Terrace, Tonypanydy. Educated at the Rhondda Technical School he left to work for the Mid Rhondda Co-operative Society in its Ferndale and Tonypanydy shops in the drapery and men's outfitting departments. During the Second World War he was not called up to the forces because of a heart complaint. Around 1942 the National Museum of Wales received an anonymous letter from 'an Admirer', a regular patron of its galleries, enclosing a work of art by the 21 year old Price. The correspondent had come across Price's work while travelling in the Rhondda Valley and said that although Price had yet to be recognised he excelled in all media.

Interestingly the Museum acted on the prompt. Through Sir Leonard Twiston Davies, the Chair of the Art and Archaeology Committee and from 1947 the Museum's President, the young artist was commissioned to undertake pencil drawing portraits for the Museum's collection of 'eminent contemporary Welshmen'. These included Mansel Thomas, the composer and conductor of the BBC Welsh Orchestra and, in 1943, the Rev George Maitland Davies, who was described in the *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* as a Welsh Calvinistic Minister and Apostle of Peace. Price drew a third portrait in 1945; the subject was incorrectly identified as Sir Owen Morgan Edwards (who died in 1920) and is presumably his son Sir Ifan ab Owen Edwards, the founder of the Urdd, whose portrait was painted by Alfred Janes in 1956. Price's drawings are held in the Museum's collection.

Still employed by the Mid Rhondda Co-operative Society, Price trained as a painter and decorator and joined its Works Department. Price twice won the National Eisteddfod art prize at Bridgend in 1948 and Dolgellau in 1949. His artistic skill, which gained him a local reputation as 'The Rembrandt of the Rhondda', together with his status as a co-operative employee, made him an obvious choice to paint the murals on the walls of the Society's hall after the war.



(fig.2) Isaac Price *New Jerusalem* c.1947/8  
Mural painted in Mid Rhondda Co-operative Society Hall, Tonypanydy  
Image courtesy of Roger Davies



(fig.3) Banner, Porth Women's Co-operative Guild 1926  
Image courtesy of Aberdare Museum

Due to his father's illness Price was unable to take a place at the Slade School of Art but subsequently won an open scholarship to Cardiff College of Art, entering at 28 years of age, where he became President of the Students' Union. He was a contemporary of some of the students at the College who formed the 'Rhondda group', including Gwyn Evans and Ernie Zobole who lived nearby.

While his maturity and warm personality influenced his younger colleagues, his traditional approach to art, which he retained throughout his life, was markedly different from their search to paint in a different idiom. He collaborated with some of them, painting a backcloth for a local theatre group and hanging the exhibition at the 1950 Caerphilly national eisteddfod. After completing their studies, while the others left the Rhondda to seek employment elsewhere, Ike stayed, working at the Rhondda College of Further Education for the rest of his life, teaching City and Guilds painting and decorating in the day and teaching art classes in the evenings. Price had paintings exhibited by the Royal Academy on several occasions. After his death in 1977 it was said that 'The Rhondda Arts Society was living proof of the zest and enthusiasm with which he inspired his students.' A memorial exhibition was held in Tonypany Library, the programme of which said:

*"He lived for his art. Not for him the glory of the sunset, nor the pretty face, but a rainy day in Clydach Vale, or a storm on the Pembrokeshire coast, or the scarred, lined face of a pensioner".*

Art critic Peter Wakelin considers Price a skilled mural painter and judges that while not artistic masterpieces his co-operative murals were highly competent and fulfilled their function well. Wakelin describes the murals as exuberant and impressive and intriguing as evocative period pieces that recall the mid-twentieth century popularity of Frank Brangwyn and William Blake.

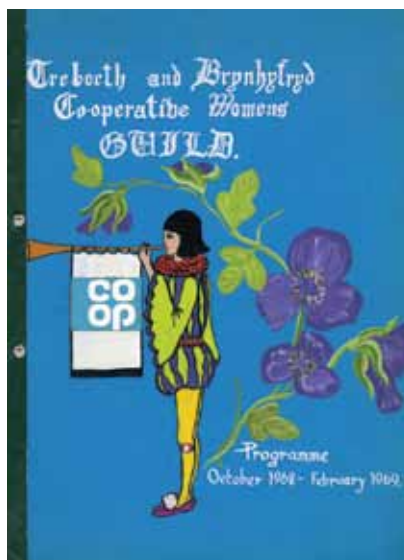
The theme of the main mural above the hall's stage was *Co-operation* (fig.1). In imitation of Victorian or even French revolution images, it featured three figures, two female towards the front and one male standing behind them, pointing towards the horizon. The young female on the right hand side was pulling something held from below by the hand of someone otherwise unseen. They were apparently sitting on coal which had been dug and next to them was a spade as well as a scythe in a combination of industrial and agricultural/rural imagery. They

sat above the word 'Co-operation' and were flanked by a dragon on either side each of which faces outwards, while below them was a bowl of fire. The whole mural was painted in a three dimensional way. Below the main mural, at the centre of the back of the stage, were two hands shaking, which was a symbol of co-operation (as were the symbols of the wheatsheaf and the beehive). Slogans in Welsh 'Cydwethrediad bywyd yw. Cydymgais nid yw ond marwolaeth' ('Co-operation is Life. Competition is Only Death') and 'Cydwethrediad yw ymwared y gweithwyr' ('Co-operation is the Deliverance of the Workers') encircled the hands. Either side of the stage were ornately painted columns with a marble effect.

At the opposite end of the hall was an elaborate mural entitled *New Jerusalem* (fig.2), based on William Blake's poem. A verse from the poem with the standard text in English appeared on the left hand side while to the right the text was changed in the Welsh language version so that the green and pleasant land was that of Wales. The scenes presented a St George-like figure in front of a chariot of fire, drawn by two horses. Arising from the chariot was what was, presumably, burning gold, and coming out of the flames a man from the waist up, who was holding forth a burning torch with a bow in his other hand. The sky was blue, but with clouds in a strange pattern, presumably an interpretation of unfolding. Apart from the Welsh translation of Blake there was no Welsh imagery in this mural. George was flanked by a young boy and a young black girl, presumably reflecting the world reach of the co-operative movement. In the foreground was a rural scene, with crops such as corn and wheat at the young girl's feet. In the background were industrial scenes with a coal mine and apparently a mill.

This mix of industrial and rural was seen to symbolise the spirit and activities of the movement and the different spheres of the economy in which it operated. Such use of imagery is also reflected in hand-painted ceramic tiled mural, installed by the national Co-operative Wholesale Society Architects' Department in Stevenage New Town in 1958-9 and designed by one of its employees G Bajjo, which still exists in the town square. Whereas the

Tonypany murals drew on a medievalism which was common in the socialist movement, the modernism in the Stevenage mural portrays an 'architectural atmosphere' which looked firmly to the future after five years of total war. This idealised representation of public art projected views on 'the shape they wanted the post-war world to take', including placing the family centrally as 'the fundamental social unit'. Price painted at least one other mural, at the Cardiff Central Youth Club, but no copy of it has so far been traced.



(fig.4) Programme Booklet, Treboeth and Brynhyfryd Co-operative Women's Guild 1968-9  
Image courtesy of Bishopsgate Institute

## Part II – Banners and Paintings

The banners of the Women's Co-operative Guild provide a different example of co-operative visual culture. Their richness and meaning are captured in a pamphlet of essays, *Each for All and All for Each*, edited by Thalia Campbell and Mervyn Wilson. This unique form of women's - indeed housewives' - public art featured home, security and love. Each section [region] used a different flower on its banners to convey its particular characteristics. The Western and Wales section's emblem of the pansy was meant to represent harmony. However, no images from South Wales were included in the pamphlet. Two banners of the Clydach Vale and Porth branches of the Guild have subsequently been located and are held in Aberdare Museum. They display different styles, with Porth incorporating the traditional wheat sheaf symbol and bearing the date 1926, which may be the date of the banner's making, as the branch was established much earlier. (fig.3). The lettering and style of the Clydach Vale banner suggests it may be older; although it would appear that a more recent rainbow banner – another symbol of the co-operative movement – was attached to it at a later date.

While neither of the two Rhondda banners incorporated a flower, a hand-painted programme of the Treboeth and Brynhyfryd Co-operative Women's Guild from 1968-9 (by which time the name of the organisation was reversed), and which is held in the Bishopsgate Institute in London, included a flower which would appear to be a pansy. (fig.4). This colourful and skilled amateur art, which decorates a folder containing the minutes of the branch, shows the spirit and creativity in the CWG in Swansea in the late 1960s, as well as members' commitment to the organisation.

In Swansea there exists one further example of co-operative visual culture. A painting of the Swansea and District co-operative store was commissioned by a local officer of the national Co-operative Retail Services. Based on a sepia print, it was painted by Peter Coleman who was employed as a CRS store signage designer/writer, for the 'new' 1950s (but now closed) Swansea Oxford Street department store, where it hung in the regional board room on the top floor. (fig.5). The store in the painting opened in 1926 and was destroyed in the three night blitz of 1941. It had been directly opposite Mount Pleasant Chapel on what was then Gower Street, now Kingsway. When the store closed the painting was transferred to the Swansea Museum, where it is on display in the Cabinet of Curiosities.

One of the criticisms of the co-operative movement was that it was too inward-looking. Much of the visual culture of the movement was primarily for internal consumption. Just as co-operative publications were mainly aimed at existing co-operators, so Women's Guild banners were mainly used at internal meetings and conferences. This may explain why much of co-operative visual culture in Wales has been overlooked. It deserves a wider airing – including the murals of Ike Price.

I am grateful for the information, advice and analysis provided by Gillian Lonergan of the Co-operative Archive and Library, Manchester; Paul Joyner of the National Library of Wales; Siân Williams of the South Wales Miners' Library; Peter Wakelin; the National Museum of Wales; Helen Thomas; Roger Davies and Keith Evans formerly of the Co-operative Group as well as the writings of John Gorman, Peter Gurney, Chris Wrigley, Thalia Campbell and Mervyn Wilson, Malcolm Hornsby, Moira Vincentelli and the Co-operative Wholesale Society's Architects Department.



(fig.5) Peter Coleman. Swansea and District Co-operative store  
Image courtesy of Swansea Museum

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## Date of Joint Lecture in May

**Friends of the Glynn Vivian/Swansea  
University Department of History and  
Classics/Swansea Branch of the Historical  
Association - Joint Lecture**

**Please note that the above lecture will take place on  
Wednesday May 13th at 6.30pm in The Dynevor Centre  
and be given by Rob Newell.**

### **Challenging Kantian Aesthetics with Turner: Sensation and Form: Beauty and the Sublime**

Kant's aesthetics will be confronted with the paintings of J. M.W. Turner in order to test out the viability of certain aspects of the doctrines involved. While this meeting of art and philosophy is problematic, Turner can nonetheless provide a basis to address Kantian aesthetics across a range of significant aspects, that is to say, all the way from the most influential considerations of sensation, through to the application of imagination, concepts, aesthetic ideas, and on to the beautiful and sublime. Kant's on-going importance for modern philosophy generally, and for aesthetics in particular, means that the issues raised are of ongoing significance for our time. I will also include some further artists, including contemporaries, who I consider can further illuminate issues raised by Kant's thinking and Turner's achievement.

© Rob Newell 2015



## Art with Friends

To mark the centenary of the beginning of the First World War, Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, in association with 'Cymru'n Cofio - Wales Remembers', delivered a series of workshops examining the role of the artist during the war using works from the Gallery collection.



The series of workshops were supported by the Friends of the Glynn Vivian in a new initiative called 'Art with Friends' and took place at the YMCA, Swansea. There were three workshops for different age groups that took place from 5 to 7 August, 2014 during the school summer holidays and offered creative skills in poetry, graphics, printmaking and drawing.

Children aged 4-7 focused on collage and colour in a workshop with artist Tom Goddard. The children were tasked with looking at mood and motion, specifically *A British tank* by Sir Muirhead Bone and *Landscape of the Bagley Woods* by Paul Nash. The group was able to get around the difficult subject by listening to historical radio footage as well as hearing poetry from the time.



In the workshop for 8-11 year olds, children explored the motivations for war during peacetime learning a range of printmaking techniques with artist Dan McCabe. The group focussed on works including *Cavalry Crossing the Piave*, 1918 by Martin Hardie and *Study of Soldiers* by Frank Brangwyn.

The final workshop with writer and poet Tracy Harris worked with 12-14 year olds to devise their own play which they performed at the end of the day. They used influences such as *Mametz Wood* by Edward Handley-Read and David Jones' epic poem *In Parenthesis*.

The work produced by the children aged 4 -14 is now available in a collaborative online book and can be viewed on the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery Website or Glynn Vivian Art Gallery Blog.

© Tom Goddard 2014

All images courtesy of Glynn Vivian Art Gallery



## Culture – in Queensland?

I never wanted to go to Australia. Somehow all that wide empty space, convict history and nasty bugs held little appeal, but when my only child emigrated there in January I had little choice ... so off I went, a two week, whistle-stop trip to her in-laws-to-be on the outskirts of Brisbane just to make sure she was safe!

We only had one day to visit Brisbane city centre but I loved it: a small, walkable centre, lots of light and greenery and a South Bank full of "Culture", with Theatre, Concert Hall, National Library, Museum and two Art Galleries side by side. The acronym QAGOMA incorporates both the Queensland Art Gallery (QAG) and Queensland Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA) which together show work by both historical and contemporary Australian and International artists.

GOMA's mission is to present a diverse range of exhibitions and permanent collection displays of local, national and international artists across both buildings. As well as the usual "international blockbuster exhibitions", the Gallery has two flagship triennials: the *Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art*, the only major series of exhibitions in the world to focus exclusively on the contemporary art of Asia and the Pacific, and a national triennial series of thematic contemporary Australian art: *Contemporary Australia*.

Our quick walk through each of the Galleries' free exhibitions showed us modern light-filled buildings full of interesting, intriguing, and amusing pieces. (But the bright sunshine made i-phone photography quite difficult so please excuse the quality of my illustrations!)



(fig.1) Yayoi Kusama *Flowers That Bloom at Midnight* 2011

In GOMA an exhibition of *Post 1989 Japanese Art* had us smiling, with colourful flowers, (fig.1), a surreal camper van, a pair of elks constructed from clear glass spheres (sourced from around the world) and a beautiful installation *Woods III* by Shigeo Toya from GOMA's permanent collection, made from carved and moulded, squared-off, tree trunks set in an open grid, suggesting a copse or forest.(fig.2).



(fig.2) Shigeo Toya *Woods III* 1991-92

From there we walked through to QAG, a 4700 square metre display space, where the internal walls create flow through the building and change the course of the viewer's journey. Particularly striking is the *Watermall* that separates the exhibition galleries from the administration and education areas. With an outside temperature of 39 degrees the 'dandelion clock' fountains sparkling outside and the large light-reflecting pool inside the gallery were wonderfully refreshing.

The Gallery's permanent collection includes historical and contemporary work by internationally known artists as well as historical and contemporary indigenous Australian work and significant art from Japan and the Pacific rim. I won't list it as the information is readily available from their website (<http://www.qagoma.qld.gov.au/>) but it covers everything from paintings, prints and sculpture to ceramics and video.

In QAG's *Sublime* show of contemporary works from the collection an installation of huge black inner tubes writhed across the ceiling while an intriguing row of variously coloured car-wash brushes spun intermittently, giving off a charge of static electricity and startling viewers. On another wall a matt black sculpture by Anish Kapoor confused our sense of spatial awareness.

The piece I fell in love with was *Reflection Model (Perfect Bliss)* (fig.3) by Takahiro Iwasaki, an intricate miniature recreation of Phoenix Hall (part of Japan's Byodo-in Temple complex) with it's own reflection, made from Japanese Cypress. The complex structure seemed completely weightless and gave me a wonderful feeling of serenity.

The final rooms, on our way out of the building, housed a show from the Indigenous Australian Collection, *Everywhen, Everywhere* with exhibits using a variety of media; an installation of terracotta cylinders, *Thap yongk (Low poles)* by Joe Ngallametta reminded me of stands of bamboo while another, strikingly colourful painting (tucked in to the right of my photo, which, alas, is not good enough to reproduce here) carries the message “Australian Art does not exist” I, for one, would beg to differ!

I'm really looking forward to my next trip down under when I hope to have more time to explore.

Text and Images © Angela George 2015



(fig.3) Takahiro Iwasaki *Reflection Model (Perfect Bliss)* 2010-12

## Chair's letter

Over the winter death has robbed us, in quick succession, of three leaders of the visual arts in south Wales.

Roger Cecil was a painter of exceptional and uncompromising talent. His work, though it tended towards abstraction, always remained strongly rooted in the landscape of his native Gwent valleys. He failed to gain wide recognition, at least until featured by the National Eisteddfod in Ebbw Vale in 2010. A visit to his spartan terraced house/studio/gallery in Abertillery was a memorable experience for anyone lucky enough to be invited.

The Pembrokeshire painter *John Knapp-Fisher* was much better known. In his cottage studio in Croesgoch he produced from the mid-1960s a long stream of paintings and prints, most of them landscapes set in his adopted county and all of them popular, far beyond Wales.

The loss of *Osi Rhys Osmond* is a particularly painful one for us in Swansea. A painter with a gift for mixing vivid colours, Osi taught for sixteen years in the School of Art. His teaching, full of knowledge and wit and always grounded in craft practice, was an inspiration to generations of students. He was also a fine writer and broadcaster in Welsh and English and an instinctive ‘provocateur’ who never ceased to question and to challenge.

We share a natural tendency to believe, on hearing of the deaths of outstanding artists, that ‘we shall never see their like again’. As Llŷr Gwyn Lewis writes in a recent elegy to John Davies, Meredydd Evans and John Rowlands, three other leading figures of Welsh life who died this winter,

*ninnau'n weddillion yma'n gofidio  
na ddaw neb yn eu lle: y gwŷr na welwn mo'u gwell  
na'u tebyg i lenwi'u sgïdiau yn diflannu i'r nos*

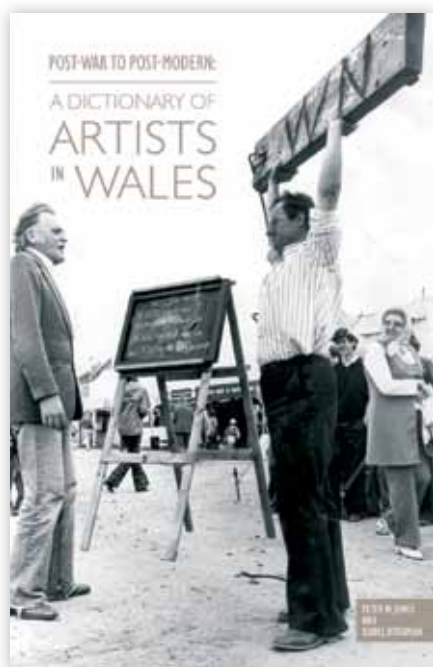
*while we who're left behind fret  
none can take their place, none can be their better  
or their equal, none can fill their shoes as they vanish into the dark*

Of course it's true, in the sense that the particular set of characteristics that made them can't be reconstructed. But we've only to look around us to see that new generations are growing, artists – some already coming to prominence, others still to make their mark – who will bring their own distinctive talents to add to the tradition.

We're lucky in Swansea that we have so many nurseries for emerging talent: not just the Faculty of Art and Design, which is now one of the few flourishing visual art education centres in Wales, but other institutions including the Glynn Vivian. The Glynn Vivian has always had a strong tradition of supporting new artists – its first director, Grant Murray, was simultaneously head of the School of Art for 33 years – and it continues to feature contemporary art strongly in all its programmes. It also supports art in the community, of course, and the Friends will be helping to fund a new season, in August this year, of ‘Art with Friends’. Once the Gallery is open again next year both kinds of contribution – serving professional artists and serving the community – should be able to resume at full strength.

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## A new art dictionary for Modern and Contemporary Wales



© photo. The Estate of Paul Davies

The advent of early spring 2015 has ushered in the launch in south and north Wales of a new reference book on art in modern and contemporary Wales: at Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales Cardiff (26 March 2015) and at Ruthin Craft Centre (20 March 2015).

It is *Post-War to Post-Modern: A Dictionary of Artists in Wales* by Peter W Jones and Isabel Hitchman (Llandysul: Gomer, 2015) and its dust jacket announces that it:

*“... is a major academic reference work covering a rich period in the arts in Wales. It is the first*

*illustrated survey, in Welsh and English editions, of the careers of artists and applied artists in Wales over the last sixty years.*

*With a scholarly introductory essay describing movements and institutions in Wales since 1945, as well as brief but authoritative biographies of artists working in traditional and new media, Post-War to Post-Modern: A Dictionary of Artists in Wales portrays the country's creativity in fine and applied art, along with its international presence.”*

The book's arrival has been long awaited. It has taken a small team of dedicated individuals fifteen years to develop and complete and it builds upon *Artists Exhibited in Wales 1945-74* (Cardiff: Welsh Arts Council, 1976) written by the art historian Kirstine Brander Dunthorne. Her solo effort resulted in “a straightforward, detailed directory” which manifested itself as a relatively small paperback with a plain green cover and no illustrations. Nevertheless, her art dictionary has proved to be so useful to me over the years that the 344 pages of my well-thumbed copy have long since detached themselves, and I know of numerous other users who will relate the same story.

It is as if the fly-away pages devoted to the artists contained therein have been telling us that “the art of Wales is a process” (to paraphrase another) and a newer, expanded dictionary was required. And now, at last, we have it – a new, 829-page hardback which records all those from before and many more, in fact almost 1,400 artists and applied artists in total. It is, therefore, a considerable addition to the growing library of publications on art in Wales.

This growth has accelerated since the 1997 Devolution ‘yes vote’. For instance, Kirstine herself has subsequently edited and co-written *Drawn from Wales: a School of Art in Swansea 1853-2003* (Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press, 2003), to which I contributed some of the artist interviews and a chapter covering the period from the Thirties to the early Sixties. More recently, she has authored *A Passion for Art (Friends of the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery 1958-*

*2008)*. For my part, I have served as a member of the editorial panel for the new art dictionary publication which contains many references to artists, applied artists and others who have been participants within the modern and contemporary art scene across all areas of Wales. The dictionary's introduction provides a useful overview of this post-war scene written by Ivor Davies who was another member of the editorial panel, as were Gareth Davies, Oliver Fairclough, Sue Hiley Harris, Isabel Hitchman, Peter W Jones and Tessa Hartog – ably assisted by Janet Jones and Valmai Ward.

Obviously it would be not make much sense to provide future readers of the dictionary with a comprehensive list of past and present practitioners from north, south, east and west. So here follows, just as a taster, a list of some of those who have been or are active within the Swansea art scene:

Firstly, of course, there are those sadly missed figures like: Irene Bache, David Bell (illustrated), Pat Briggs, Andy Charlton, Ronald Cour (illustrated), Jenkin and Vincent Evans, Will Evans, George Fairley, Archie Rhys Griffiths, Gwenny Griffiths, Kenneth Hancock (illustrated), Alfred Janes (illustrated), Jack Jones (illustrated), Alf Lavender, Mervyn Levy, David Lloyd, Howard Martin (illustrated), William Grant Murray, Peter Nicholas, Jane Phillips, Bill Price, Ceri Richards (illustrated), Will Roberts (illustrated), Richard and Rosemary Wakelin (both illustrated), Jack Waldron, Evan Walters (illustrated) and Archie Williams;

Next there are those senior figures who were born in the 1920s – such as Muriel Clement, John F Cooper (illustrated), Glenys Cour (illustrated), George Little and Gordon Stuart;

Thirdly, there are those born in the 1930s – like Ceri Barclay, David Barron, David Randall Davies, Michael Freeman, Valerie Ganz (illustrated) and Aneurin Jones (illustrated) – and in the 1940s: Angela Brunt, Adrienne and John Howes, Tim Lewis (illustrated), Caroline Little, June Mayhew, Bernard Mitchell (illustrated), Alan Perry, Jeff Spedding, Judith Stroud and John Upton;

Those born in the 1950s include: Alexander Beleshenko, Nikki Cass, Sally Hands, Amber Hiscott (illustrated), Christine Jones (illustrated), Andrea Liggins, Nigel Meager, Robert Newell, Carys Roberts, Helen Sinclair, Ceri Thomas (illustrated), Gareth Thomas, Alan Williams and Vivienne Williams. Whilst those from the 1960s are represented by: Tim Davies (illustrated), David Hastie (illustrated), Nick Holly, Sarah Hopkins, Karen Ingham, Catrin Jones (illustrated), Jamie Michael Jones, Sigrid Muller (illustrated), Anna and Sarah Noel (both illustrated) and Roger Tiley;

Lastly, there are the youngest representatives amongst whom are – from the 1970s – Helena Eferova, Anna Lewis (illustrated), Charlotte Swann and Mari Thomas (illustrated) and – from the 1980s – Tom Goddard and Fern Thomas.

This sample roll call gives an indication of the important part which Swansea has played in the development of a modern and contemporary art scene in Wales. And this is serendipitously reinforced by the images on the dictionary's covers, because its front cover carries a photograph of the Mumbles-born Paul Davies (1947-93) holding aloft a ‘Welsh Not’ and its back cover shows a photograph of a feather wrap by the Swansea-based Anna Lewis (b 1976).

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For more information, visit <http://www.gomer.co.uk/index.php/books-for-adults/art/post-war-to-post-modern-a-dictionary-of-artists-in-wales.html>