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GLYNN VIVIAN

Newsletter Spring 2021  
Cylchlythyr Gwanwyn 2021

## Hello!

At the time of going to press, the Glynn Vivian gallery remains closed until further instruction from the Welsh Government.

Follow @GlynnVivian on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for reopening news.

In the meantime, we hope you have been enjoying the range of online activities on offer from the Gallery, including new online virtual tours of the current exhibitions, together with the Friends ongoing programme of Zoom talks.

We hope you are all keeping safe and well and look forward to seeing you in the Gallery in due course.

*Your membership subscriptions are important to us and a vital source of revenue. We appreciate your continued support.*

Louise and Kay  
(Editorial team)

# The Illustrator and the Painter at Home in Myself

## Derek Bainton

It plays out that my most meaningful, creative work comes from the truest, most personal parts of me. When I look across the spread of my practice and research, I see recurring themes that have bubbled away since I was a child. The House. Home. Nest. Bird. Belonging. Not Belonging. Cuckoo. These are the textures and tensions that bind me it seems.

Thinking back, I can easily summon the wooden floor of the Risca Cub Scout club hall, sitting in a circle, a dusty smell and a mild anxiety even then. We were known as the 'Risca Cuckoos', a longstanding emblem of the village. I didn't realise the wider connotation at the time. As a child I associated it with finding a nest of eggs hidden in the ivy of a high stone

wall. These were discoveries that evoked feelings in me I never found words for, until I tapped into them for post graduate research.

Nests are a wonder. They conjure up notions of safety, warmth, security, a nurturing intimacy, a maternal bond. Associations with home are made, or at least that fugitive feeling I associate with and hold onto when everything feels right and settled.

It is not difficult to think of narratives that begin and end at home. In mind of tales like *Hansel and Gretel*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, *The Cat in the Hat* and *The Wizard of Oz*, it is easy to imagine that amongst our most fundamental instincts are compulsions to dwell and to



Front Cover: *Hope Street*,  
Derek Bainton, Mixed Media

*Coming Home in the City of Newport*, Oil on board, digitally reproduced on steel



Above: *The Barry Island Line*, Oil on board. Above right: *The City Arms*, Oil on board. Right: *Clwb Ifor Bach, Womanby Street*, Oil on board.



wander. To stretch our wings and then yearn for home. In doing so comes a sense of feeling at home and equally, not feeling at home. For nests can be dangerous places. Therein lies the opposing duality, perhaps a common tension we learn to live with throughout life.

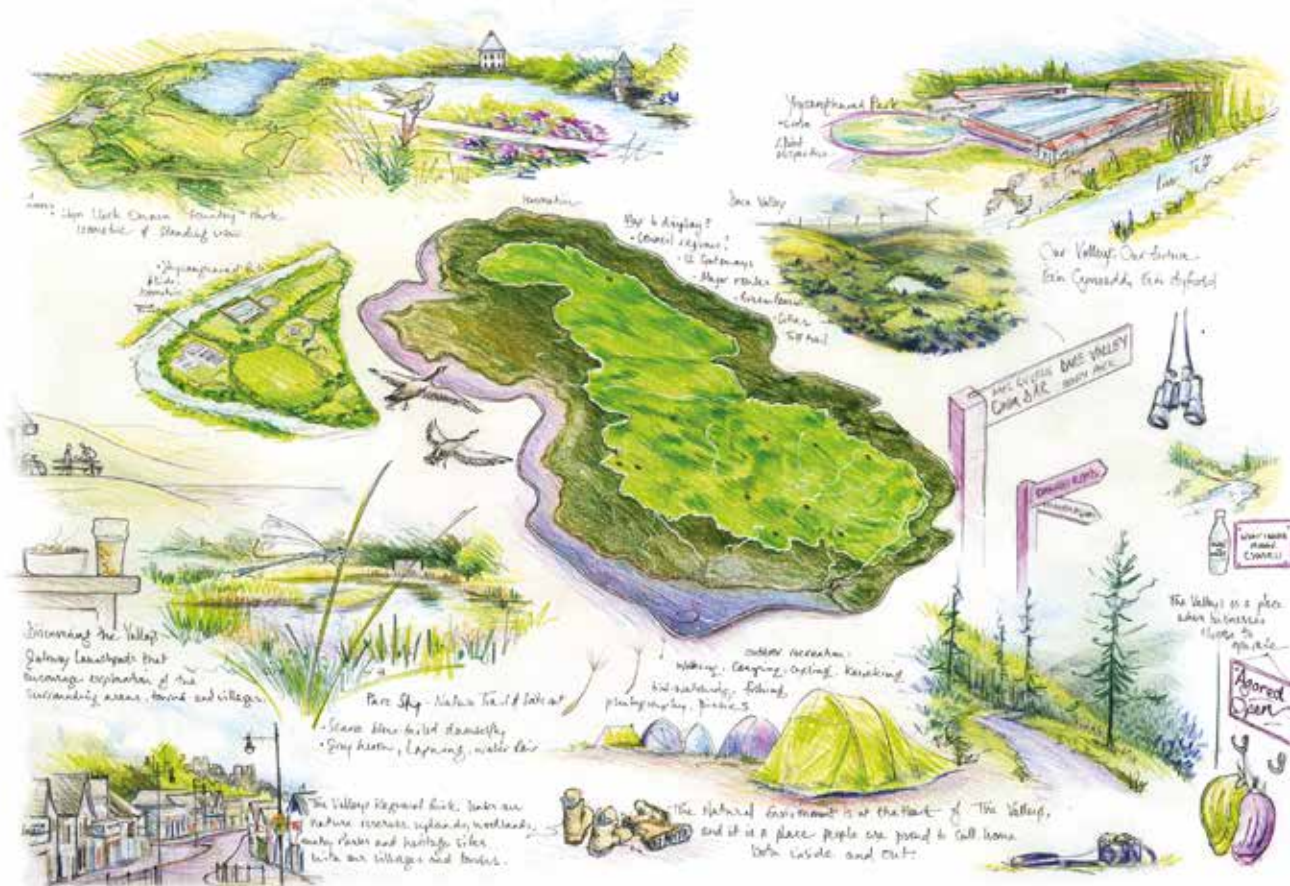
My practice as an illustrator and location painter takes me in opposing directions too and yet it is the notion of home that connects them. That I identify with the illustrator and location painter in me as almost being two separate selves is a telling one.

As a location painter I cycle around the city with the wooden paintbox my father made me. I am drawn to restless atmospheres. Locales that have a tangible air of anonymity and an almost unknowable feel. Places where maps run out. I search for something out of the ordinary to paint. The banal and commonplace. A house that keeps watch, an old window that looks. Stationary but somehow not still. The uncanny – the familiar and strange, the homely and unhomely at once.

I paint quickly by day, less rushed by night. I am aware of the sun's path and I position myself where I know I can slow the shadow, striving to capture an essence of all that I search for. If there's balance and resolve in my location work, somehow, I am not happy with it. I want to achieve Barthes' punctum in my painting. A stillness that is not quite so, a belonging and unbelonging at once.

In my illustration work, recurring references to home take on a different, more symbolic guise. A recently installed 7metre steel panelled public art commission, *Coming Home in the City of Newport* explored the theme of home and what it means to us. I initially researched the Newport Wetlands National Nature Reserve, an environmental jewel of Newport, whose importance sometimes goes quietly unnoticed. The outside wetlands, home to a raft of protected and endangered birds blend into a homely interior, whose residents are symbolised by cherished keepsakes and hats of different kinds.

The narrative was developed through workshops with Newport's youth group 'Unity'. Their stories became entwined in the fabric of the artwork, including playing conkers using an older brother's shoelaces, or being tucked up in bed reading a book by Lewis Carroll. Another observation pictured home in broader sense, walking in the Brecon Beacons. Feelings too were shared. The yellow elephant in the mural was inspired by



Working visuals for the Valleys Regional Park visitor map

a conversation about sometimes feeling anxiety at home, almost as if there was an “elephant on my chest.” The symbolic weight of the elephant was transformed into a small toy, which might be hugged close, and as such, a hopeful way to manage such anguish.

With credit to what I learned with the youth group, being at home outdoors is central to my current illustration work to produce large, illustrated site maps across the South Wales Valleys Regional Park. The VRP is a vast geographical landscape spanning Cwmcarn Forest Drive all the way to Llyn Lech Owain Country Park in Cross Hands. Beyond wayfinding, my aim for the artwork is to capture a sense of what it is to be a part of the valleys and the most amazing natural environment. A place people are proud to call home inside and out. How health and wellbeing are as much about belonging to, feeling a part of and connected to the valleys as they are about exercise and the outdoors.

Eleven years ago in my Master’s research, I reasoned and agreed with academic writer Irit Rogoff’s thoughts, that to “unbelong and to ‘not be at home’ is the very condition of critical activity.” Well, nothing is constant it seems. Conditions change and critically, at least, I feel quite at home right now.

Derek will be talking about his work on Wednesday 28th April at 7pm. Zoom details will be emailed beforehand.

Derek Bainton  
 illustration • graphic design • location painting  
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Valleys Regional Park:  
 valleysregionalpark.wales

# Painting on Toilet Rolls

Carys Evans

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Before lockdown in 2020 I was painting from my large city centre space in Elysium's Mansel Street studios. All this changed when the instruction came to stay at home. At first, thinking that this was for a couple of weeks maybe, I enjoyed the peace and quiet of a new way of living, and the beautiful weather. But the need to paint is always there. So when a light-hearted challenge came from a friend to paint on an empty toilet roll – that symbol of the panic buying – I thought I would join in. I had few painting materials with me at home: some emulsion paint, a few acrylics, some pastels and a couple of threadbare brushes. After painting one toilet roll, I was hooked. It was almost a cross between being a 2D and a 3D artist. Working on a small curved surface was a challenge, but having a small 'object' that could sit on my mantelpiece like a fake vase was a joy. A toilet roll, after priming and preparing, could take between one hour

and five hours to complete. The subject matter was easy. I would choose anything that I came across during the day. Usually it was something seen on a daily walk or something from the garden. So my toilet rolls became my visual diary. There were birds, a bee, a starfish, flowers, my grandson's toys, a dog. Sometimes, holding and painting them for long periods, my hands would become glued to the toilet rolls by the drying layers of paint. My collection grew to 32 painted rolls.

Each day I would post my toilet rolls on Twitter and Facebook. The support and enthusiasm from friends and followers were so encouraging that I felt compelled to continue. Empty toilet rolls from neighbours kept appearing in my porch, and a parcel of them even arrived from Sheffield. One particular tweet went viral, with 5,500 likes. There were comments like 'these make me happy', 'I thought they were very expensive clay tumblers' and

'it makes my day seeing these'. Painting the toilet rolls makes me realise the value of art at any level. This is not grand art worthy of a big gallery or high sums of money, but they have value in that they brought me and others joy in a difficult time and captured a moment.

The problem then became, what to do with them? I would have liked to have auctioned them or sold them for charity, or exhibited them. But Covid restrictions made this very complicated. The problem was solved when Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales at St Fagans said they wanted to collect them for their Covid collection. And that's where the toilet rolls are now. I don't know if they will ever see the light of day again. But knowing they are catalogued and safe and available for anyone to see on request, or that they might be part of a Covid exhibition in future, is delightful.

# The Grand Memory

Kasia Lodyga and Jordan Charles

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**The Grand Memory: Past, Present, Future** encapsulates specific memories of the Grand Theatre building in Swansea, not just as a theatre, but as a place that encourages everybody to visit and experience something brand new, providing a space safe for escapism and entertainment.

The project, sponsored by The National Lottery Heritage Fund captures people's memories of what the Grand building means to them, whether they have lived in Swansea, migrated to the area or worked within the building. The project shines a light on their stories using photographs and interviews, exploring how the building has evolved over the years to where it is today, what the future will look like and how it has captured the hearts of many. This project not only dives into the past but it also explores the importance of such an iconic place to have in an ever changing city.

Established in 1897 Swansea's Grand Theatre is a building with rich cultural history and is an integral centre piece of Swansea City. It has stood strong and proud for over 120 years and has always opened its doors for everyday people to get a taste of stardom and offer the potential



The Grand Theatre interior and some of the participants in the project.  
From left to right: Patience Bentu, Geoffrey Lee and Jill Duarte

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for life changing possibilities, previously lending its stage to legendary stars, from comedy duo Ryan and Ronnie to local legend Catherine Zeta Jones.

Race Council Cymru is currently facilitating the first multi-cultural hub in Wales which will be based within the Arts Wing of the Theatre. The Grand Hub is made up of 23 different grassroots ethnic minority groups who will be situated

within the building. The Grand Multicultural Hub aspires to develop a new innovative Contemporary Programme of professional performance, cultural celebration and community practice.

The Grand Memory project will be launched on 22nd April 2021 and can be viewed after this date at:  
[thegrandmemory.co.uk](http://thegrandmemory.co.uk)

# Letter from the Tate



Letter From the Tate is a regular feature written by a member of Tate staff about a Welsh-related work in the Tate collection.

David Hingley, Head of Visitor Experience, has chosen *The force that through the green fuse drives the flower (trial proof)*, Ceri Richards, 1965  
© The estate of Ceri Richards

## Memories for the Future

I was lucky enough to live and study in Swansea for three years in the late 90's. Although it was History I was concentrating on, it was Swansea and the Gower that left their impact, so it's now a place of home-coming, friendship and fond memories.

I've chosen Ceri Richards, and particularly 'the force that through the green fuse drives the flower', because it combines my passion for Dylan Thomas, with my delight at discovering Richards' *Twelve Lithographs for Six Poems*, from which this piece is taken.

At Tate, my role is very much about making things work, ensuring staff and visitors are looked after, worrying about the queues and the openings of new exhibitions. As we all prepare for the world to re-open once again, and as the daffodils bloom in my garden 'the force that drives those flowers' seems more important and life-enhancing than ever.

The work can be viewed online at: [www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/richards-the-force-that-through-the-green-fuse-drives-the-flower-trial-proof-p06713](http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/richards-the-force-that-through-the-green-fuse-drives-the-flower-trial-proof-p06713). Or viewed by appointment at Tate Britain.

Richards was commissioned to illustrate the poem for Volume 3 of *Poetry London* in 1947, and this led to a series of paintings and lithographs for Thomas's poems. This illustration uses swirling lines as extensions of the lines of the poem. The green figure providing a clear metaphor for the root and foliage of the flower in the poem, whilst at the same time the skeletal figure speaks of decay and death and the circularity of life. The vibrant colours and the rhythm of the work seem perfect for the theme of the circularity of nature, the growth and then decay.

For me both artist and poet are driven by that same spirit, and remind us all of nature's undeniable power.

David Hingley 2021

# Bare Red

Sue Williams



*'Living on your own is one thing but living in isolation is another. To look out of the window and imagine the world is still moving but you've stood still. BARE RED exposes fear, freedom of imagination, loneliness and hope from she who is looking out of her window' –*

Sue Williams – From the Studio – Gallery TEN. 2021

Whilst exhibiting in Hangzhou, China I became fascinated with the Chinese traditional concertina artbooks. Consequently I had 3 custom made in Hangzhou Market book makers at The Humble House of Four Treasures (the four treasures referring to the four materials used in Chinese painting/calligraphy: brush, ink, paper and inkstone).

At the start of the first lockdown I felt overwhelmingly isolated and the lack of 'real life' human contact in my home environment became a preoccupation. Consequently the Chinese books became my constant source of communication, my companions, a way of creating a two-way conversation. Their very presence

allowed me to work both day and night, distracting me when my sleep patterns were being disrupted. These books gave my voice the opportunity to search for answers to such difficult circumstances where life, death, ego and human vulnerability all became amplified to a very high pitch.

The works were exhibited in Gallery TEN, Cardiff in the From the Studio Series, showcasing work made during lockdown. Gallery TEN owner, Cat Gardiner saw the significance of the work and contacted Morfydd Bevan, art curator at the National Library of Wales, to suggest they should be added to the collection.

[www.nomorepink.com](http://www.nomorepink.com)



Top left: Bare Red p.5. Top right: Bare Red cover. Above: Bare Red p.13 (detail).

Each accordion-fold book includes 25 pages measuring 40 x 40cm, making the total length of each volume a continuous 10 metres between two fabric covered and embroidered hard covers.

Materials: ink, spray paint, highlighter pens, acrylic paint and pencil together with torn paper, magazine cut-outs and cardboard collaged throughout.



# Y Cyfyngiadau'n Ysbrydoli Celf

## Owain Sparnon

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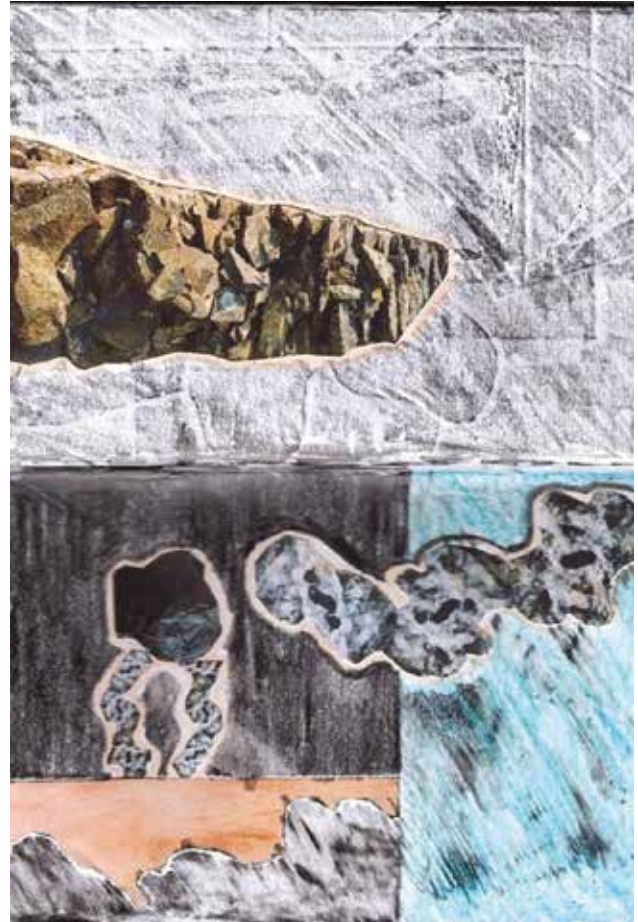
Owain Sparnon, Myfyriwr Celfyddyd Gain 3edd flwyddyn yng Ngholeg Celf Abertawe

Mae'r gwanwyn, sy'n amser o ddechreuadau newydd a thyfiant, wedi cyrraedd, ac mae hyn yn codi'r awydd arnaf i fyfyrio ar y datblygiadau yn fy ngwaith celf a ddaeth trwy archwilio technegau a phrosesau newydd a heriol yn ystod y cyfyngiadau symud. Cefais amser wrth fy modd yn datblygu fy nghreadigrwydd yn ystod y cyfnod hwn, gan arbrofi gyda chyfryngau o bob math.

Mae'r cyfyngiadau symud wedi bod yn ddiflas i'r rhan fwyaf ohonom am sawl rheswm ac mae pawb yn edrych ymlaen at adeg pan fydd bywyd yn dychwelyd i ryw fath o normalrwydd. Yn rhyfedd iawn fodd bynnag, o ran fy ngwaith celf, mae'r cyfyngiadau (yn enwedig y rhai dros gyfnod yr haf) wedi bod yn fuddiol ifi.



'Cadwyn I'. Un o'r darnau cyntaf ifi greu oedd Cadwyn I, a grëwyd mewn ymateb i'r ffaith fy mod yn cael fy nghyfyngu gartref ac yn teimlo'n rhwystredig. Ond roedd y rhwystredigaeth hon yn heriol a cheisiais ymateb yn gadarnhaol i'r teimlad. Collage digidol yw'r darn, sef fy mhrif gyfrwng ar yr adeg hon.



Sketchbook. Mae llyfrau braslunio wedi bod yn rhan hanfodol o fy ngwaith yn ystod y cyfyngiadau ac yn ffordd ifi ymateb yn gyflym i bethau oedd yn fy nharo. Roedd mynd am dro yn rhywbeth a wnes i'n gyson, a cefais fy ysbrydoli gan bethau nad oedd wedi fy nharo i o'r blaen ac na fyddwn efallai yn eu hystyried yn 'gelfyddydol', gan gynnwys sment, gwifrau, gwair a thywod. Mwynheais gofnodi'r rhain yn fy llyfrau braslunio, gan newid cyd-destun y deunyddiau.

Cyn y cyfyngiadau symud, paentio oedd fy mhrif gyfrwng ond gan nad oedd modd mynd i'r brifysgol, gweithio yn fy stiwdio yno a defnyddio fy neunyddiau ac offer arferol, cefais fy ngorfodi i newid cyfeiriad fy ngwaith celf a mynd ar hyd trywydd gwahanol gan ddefnyddio'r ychydig o ddeunyddiau oedd gen i ar y pryd. Dechreuais ymateb i bethau a welais bob dydd yn fy nghartref, yn yr ardd ac wrth fynd am dro, gan gynnwys deunyddiau cyffredin fel

cerrig, pren, defnydd a golau. Yn anfwriadol, newidiodd cynnwys a chyfeiriad fy ngwaith wrth archwilio'r pethau hyn. Arbrofais gyda ffotograffiaeth, fy ffôn, fideo a sain, a chynhyrchais weithiau na fyddwn wedi eu creu pe na bai'r cyfyngiadau mewn grym. Cefais foddhad mawr wrth greu'r gweithiau hyn a bodlonrwydd gyda'r canlyniadau terfynol.

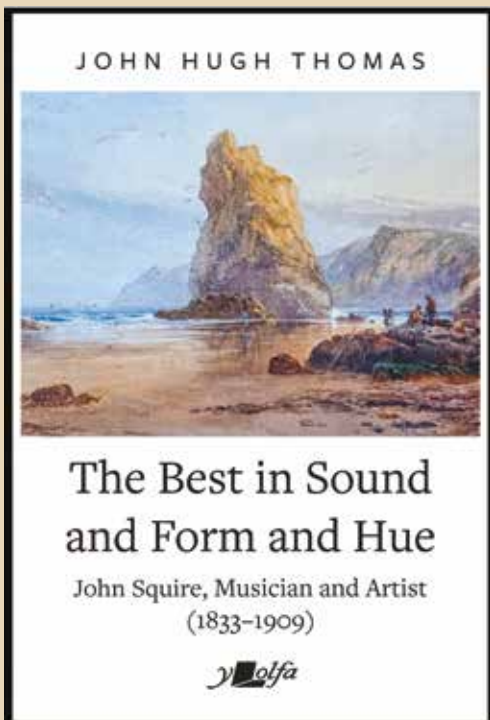
Ar ôl misoedd o weithio gartref fodd bynnag, teimlad braf oedd dychwelyd i stiwdio'r brifysgol ym mis Medi. Ers hynny, mae fy ngwaith wedi bod yn ymateb i'r gweithiau a greais yn ystod yr haf ac i'r sefyllfa o orfod edrych ar y byd mewn ffordd wahanol. Trwy baent, collage, cerflunio a chyfryngau digidol, rwy'n parhau i ymateb i bethau rwy'n dod ar eu traws yn ddyddiol gan gynnwys ffotograffau, tirluniau, golau adlewyrchol a siapiau a ffurfiau. Rwyf hefyd yn ymddiddori yn y syniad o haenu, datgelu a newid cyd-destun delweddau.

Rwy'n gwerthfawrogi'r cyfle a ges i yn ystod y cyfyngiadau i newid cyfeiriad fy ngwaith celf ac a arweiniodd at ddiddordebau ac ysbrydoliaethau eraill. Rwy'n gwybod na fyddai fy ngwaith celf presennol yr hyn ydyw oni bai am y cyfyngiadau.

An English translation of this article is available on the Friends website: [www.friendsoftheglynnvician](http://www.friendsoftheglynnvician).



'Tirwedd'. Cyfuniad o baentiad a cherflun yw'r darn Tirwedd sy'n ymateb i'r ffin rhwng paentiad a cherflun – rhywbeth arall a oedd yn fy niddori ar y pryd. Collage digidol yw'r darn, sy'n cynnwys manylion o baentiadau, cerfluniau a delweddau o fy stiwdio. Er mai darn digidol yw hwn, roeddwn am gyfleu cydbwysedd, dyfnder a thrymder.



**JOHN SQUIRE** was a banker and skilled landscape painter whose work was exhibited at the prestigious British Royal Academy, but more importantly he was also a musician who had great influence on musical life in the West of England and South Wales.

John Hugh Thomas' *The Best in Sound and Form and Hue: John Squire, Musician and Artist (1833-1909)* is a fascinating work of social history, based on extensive primary-source research, places his life and career in its broader cultural and social context to give a history of classical music-making in provincial Victorian Britain. A detailed account of an important and entirely obscured figure, this is an excellent contribution to the history of amateur music-making, its increasing professionalisation and the formation of British tastes outside London during the Victorian period.

Published 25 June 2021, £14.99 (ISBN: 978-1-78461-968-8)

For more information contact: Y Lolfa: [www.ylolfa.com](http://www.ylolfa.com)/[ylolfa@ylolfa.com](mailto:ylolfa@ylolfa.com)/01970 832304

# Thoughts on the Future of Libraries

Paul McGrath

If buildings are a physical representation of civilised society, then it follows the 'library' – as a vessel for freely accessible knowledge – should command a pre-eminent position in that society. Perhaps that is why libraries exist. Or is the National Library of Wales, to take as an example, just an outdated symbol of bourgeois aggrandisement? Whatever your view, the fact remains the services a library provides tend to enrich our lives not impoverish them. Even though there might be a level of happiness to be found in ignorance, this surely cannot be an aspirational objective.

When in the early 20th Century, Welsh miners' institutes proudly provided libraries for their communities independent of government or philanthropic support, they sought to encourage personal advancement. They recognised that individuals who could not, or did not seek to accumulate knowledge would continue to be denied power or influence over their lives. Today though, unencumbered access to curated knowledge (and by implication, progress) is not celebrated as a virtue or supported as a necessity. Rather, it is threatened. Not only by the internet but by less and less communal funding finding its way to immaterial, often cerebral activities that have no apparent monetary benefit. That libraries are now being slowly strangled by the hands of heedless politicians, despite an overall rise in centralised tax revenue over the last decade, is nothing short of scandalous for a wealthy, so-called civilised society.

If our libraries start disappearing, one by one, here and there, what claim can be made that we live in a civilised society? The bricks and mortar of our society may need to be constantly re-examined but the conceptual idea of a library and what it offers will persevere. Even if the physical fabric of our society should fall into ruin.



A miner reads a book in his local library, April 1947. (Photo by Nat Farbman/The LIFE Picture Collection/Getty Images.)

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### Recent prize winners

November	Phyll Barclay £25	M H Hughes £10
December	J Williams £25	M B Jones £10
January	Pamela Davies £25	Penny Burton £10
February	E Jones £25	M Morgan £10
March	Judy Nettleship £25	Betty Lewis £10

To join, send your contact details, together with a cheque for £12.00 payable to 'Association of Friends of Glynn Vivian Art Gallery 100 Club' to Hilary Rose, 16 Kilfield Rd, Bishopston SA3 3DL

# Breathe

Helen Booth, winner of the Friends of Glynn Vivian Prize at the Beep Painting Exhibition in 2018, is exhibiting a new body of work at Oriel Myrddin in Carmarthen. Originally billed to open to the public in January, the exhibition is now available to view on the gallery website until 22nd May. The majority of work in this solo exhibition will be a direct response to Helen's residency at Hafnarborg Arts and Culture Centre in Iceland earlier this year. Witnessing what Helen describes as a 'divine landscape', these works will interpret nature in its purist form using the limitless variations of the single dot.



[www.orielmyrddingallery.co.uk](http://www.orielmyrddingallery.co.uk)

## Welcome Gemma!



In January Gemma Mughini joined the team at the Glynn Vivian Gallery as exhibitions assistant. She is assisting the exhibitions officer in curating all aspects of organising permanent collection displays and the temporary exhibitions programme. She will be also involved in maintaining photographic documentation and record systems of all programme activities as well as helping with the marketing and public relations for exhibitions. Gemma has a background in visitor experience and exhibition organisation, having worked for many years in art galleries, museums, and in corporate events organisations. Growing up in Firenze, Italy, gave her a strong artistic awareness and kindled a fascination for art and history.

*Gemma says: As a visitor I often experienced heritage as something able to make me feel better, allowing me to feel part of a community and creating a sense of belonging to a place. I have been working in the heritage sector with this goal in mind, hoping to collaborate in creating a space where people feel welcomed, represented and included. It's a sector that has so much to offer, there is something for everyone – linking nature to literature, history to advocacy. The way we interpret the stories of our heritage shape so much of our present and how we approach our future. I'm really looking forward to meeting you all and being back in the gallery!*

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This edition of the Newsletter was produced by Louise Burston and Kay Renfrew, and designed by Louise Burston. Please email the Friends if you would like to contribute an article or editorial.

[www.friendsoftheglynnvivan.com](http://www.friendsoftheglynnvivan.com)

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