

Hello from the Chairman

Welcome to our June newsletter. We hope that you are feeling fit and healthy and ready to enjoy the summer.

The committee has taken a bit of a rest this half of the year but we are getting ourselves ready to hold some of our regular fundraisers: our Quiz Night (Thursday 24 October?) and, the biggest one of all, the Art Auction, for which we have a definite date: 6 December, so look out for information and a catalogue round about November time.

All our efforts at fundraising have allowed us to gather a sizeable sum in the Friends' bank account and it was with great pleasure that we have just been able to hand over £19,310.00. This will be used for the following...

- A Condition Survey to meet CAT requirements
- An IT upgrade for the Museum
- 20% of a grant towards Glyn Harries salary
- New marketing communication materials
- Payment for an extra day to the contract for the Interpretation Officer, Hannah Saunders

... money well spent, we think.

I do hope that we shall see some of you at our AGM on Thursday 27 June, 7.00pm in the Mayor's Parlour at the De Valence Pavilion, Upper Frog Street.

Your committee may not have been very busy but the staff at the Museum certainly have. Read on...

Martin White

Museum news

Curator

I'm delighted to be writing another article from the Curator's desk at the Museum.

The first thing I must do is pass on sincerest thanks from all the team for the generous funding support from the Friends. I have spoken to some of you already to pass on my personal thanks and to

convey the enthusiasm and delight of all the team when we heard the news of your willingness to provide funding. This will make a really significant difference to us here going forwards.

A particular issue we had was the IT situation and your support has allowed us to bring in a specialist firm to resolve the many legacy issues, including allowing our guests proper wifi access throughout the museum. Another huge improvement is our ability now to operate collections management software across multiple computers, thereby radically increasing the amount of cataloguing we are able to do. We are also particularly looking forward to being able to use the marketing funding to increase our profile, visitor numbers and income.

I hope that many of you are aware of our new 'Curator's Corner' in the *Observer*, which is another opportunity for us to promote the Museum and keep everyone up to date.

We have unfortunately had some issues with the building, including a ceiling fall in one of our stores. This has very sadly necessitated the removal of some of the collection to a temporary storage area in the exhibition gallery (See the installation below – worthy of Tate Modern? Ed.) but we are currently working hard to get this resolved with PCC.

We have also identified some legacy issues with collections management and the location of items



within the building. However, we are now in a position to address this.

As well as continuing to work towards increasing footfall and income, my main objective will now be to work with grant funding to maximum effect.

The team continues to work well together and many people have remarked on the positive atmosphere in the Museum and the 'buzz' about the place.

Finally, you may have heard the story of Dolly Parton and her links with Tenby. Sadly, it turned out not to be correct but we did get the opportunity to promote the Museum by appearing on Jason Mohammed's BBC show to discuss it.

I remain very grateful to you all for your support and to the Museum team for their hard work.

David Llewellyn

Gossip from the Assistant Curator's desk

Summer is in full swing, but rainy days are always a benefit for us at the Museum. Last Tuesday, Kyle and David took about £1,000 at the till, thanks to the inclement weather. On sunny days, we benefit from parents trying to find something for their children to do out of the sunshine. Weather plays a large part in the Museum, when high winds mean we can't open the front door, and we won't mention the rain and its impact on the Museum at the moment...

Volunteer numbers are increasing, which is great for us. It allows time for staff to sort out the collections and plan future projects for volunteers and staff to participate in. The till point is the area of the meet-and-greet of the visitors, where we chat with them about the Museum and other places they are planning to visit, and is a key interaction point amongst volunteers and visitors. We love the positive comments and take on board other observations to improve the visitor experience. For example, the Augustus John video, that is part of the gallery exhibit, now has subtitles as a result of one visitor's suggestion. Our volunteer James, with his audio-visual talents, was able to rectify that.

One visitor said that he thought Tenby Museum the very best small museum anywhere, and very kindly put the comment down in our visitors' book.



That visitor was a past director of the Museum and Galleries Commission from the 1990s!

The scheme whereby the Museum takes payments for Friends' membership seems to be working well. Sometimes, it has generated new members at point of sale purely because they can use their 10% discount in the shop immediately, which is a win-win situation for all.

Finally, I took this photo one morning when opening up. What is the phrase: 'Turn swords into ploughshares' ...



Jacky Baker

Interpretation Officer update

How time has flown by – almost 7 months in post! We've had three wonderful exhibitions: *Painting Heaven from the Car* by Kate Edge, *Lust for Light* by Dai David, *Tenby Treasures: Nostalgic Brushstrokes* by Rachel Rasmussen, and we're close to launching *Beyond the Light of a Magical Moon* by Anita Woods. Social media is becoming more of a focus, with videos already released featuring Nina Hamnett, Martin Parr and Gwen John, and many more in the pipeline. I'm currently in discussions with a musician who has made Gwen and Augustus themed music videos, a textile artist who has created a stunning Nina Hamnett inspired slip, and other artistic practitioners who want to showcase their stimulated creations at the Museum.

Whilst a big part of my focus has been on delivering the 2024 exhibition programme planned by my predecessors, behind the scenes I've been developing an exciting timetable for 2025, with the likes of: painter Meinir Mathias; photographer Mohamed Hassan; Queer Collective SPAF; and photographer Laurie Broughton, who are booked in for shows in our new gallery. I'm also in the early stages of planning a community exhibition and makers showcase for autumn/winter '25, and will be seeking grant funding for a residency programme for artists, writers, academics and activists, to encourage creative interpretation of our collections, and encourage new audiences to engage with us as an organisation.

I'm ever so grateful to the Friends for making me feel so welcome, for helping with our exhibition launches and for supporting me in my role. You've

really helped me find my feet, and I look forward to getting to know you even better as time goes on!

Hannah Saunders

Outreach and Education Officer

I am both grateful and delighted to be continuing at the Museum in 2024, this time in the above role.

This year, my primary focus has been to increase the number of volunteers at the Museum. As a result of the bright yellow posters I put up in town and a coffee morning that I hosted on Tuesday 21 May, I have been delighted to welcome eight new volunteers from the local community. In addition, I have welcomed work experience students from the University of Wales Trinity St David. At the time of writing we have three, all art students from the Swansea Metropolitan campus.

This year has seen many interesting events, starting with a talk by our Curator. His talk, *A Brief History of Tenby*, took the audience on a whistlestop chronology of happenings in the town over the centuries. It proved popular, and is being repeated for daytime guests on selected days. Two archeological-themed editions followed, with guest speakers David Howell of PAS Cymru and Luke Jenkins of Dyfed Archeology respectively.

April saw Dr David Boyd Haycock give an expert illustration of the life and works of Augustus John and Father Gildas Gage of Caldey Island gave an excellent talk on the Reformation era, based upon his own research. Father Gildas proved to be a popular speaker, and he is to return on 17 October, to consider aspects of women's history.

In June, there's a second talk by David Llewellyn, on Thursday 6th, considering the 80th anniversary of D-Day. A fortnight later, Tudor Thomas



will be shedding light on the chaotic era of Tenby town in the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

For children, I have chosen a train of maritime-based activity days for 2024. We started in February, with dolphins as the focus. It was pleasing to see familiar faces at the table on activity days – no doubt a sign that previous events and outreach with the local schools have awakened a curiosity in the minds of the young participants.

On Wednesday 29 May, we will be considering seagulls. Mick Brown will be there, sharing his



ornithological expertise with our young guests. Over the summer, we will be looking at crustaceans, jellyfish, squid, shrimp, mussels and then salmon. All activity days will run on Wednesdays from 11am until 4pm.

As ever, it would be excellent to see you at these events.

VOLUNTEERS
still needed at the Museum

Glyn Harries

Michael Brew – a tribute



Dr Mike Brew was appointed as a trustee of Tenby Museum & Art Gallery in 1995. He was elected Hon. Curator in 2005, and served in that capacity until 2010. Mike was the lead negotiator on the proposed 'Capital Asset Transfer' and served as liaison with the Friends of Tenby Museum. He actively encouraged and

supported Pembrokeshire-based artists. He was still a trustee at the time of his death and will be greatly missed by staff and trustees at the Museum.

Thoughts from a friend

Oh dear, how do I even begin to sum up this wonderful man? I could never adequately express my feelings and appreciation of Michael's contributions to society in general and to Tenby Museum in particular.

I first met Michael some 40 years ago when we embarked on a mission to become failed golfers, a friendship and partnership which has endured over the years. We toured Europe, searching for the Holy Grail of golf and singularly failing to get anywhere near to finding it, but, en route, often being terrified by his somewhat adventurous approach to driving...

He very reluctantly agreed to become a trustee a number of years ago, but, in a very short time immersed himself in the Trust, working so hard and putting the welfare of an organisation he grew to love as a priority. Michael was a unique person who would take on the most difficult and often daunting issues, an example being the Capital Asset Transfer negotiations with Pembrokeshire County Council which has taken an enormous amount of effort to bring close to a conclusion. We owe him a huge debt of gratitude for his incredible dedication over many years. Michael and his dear friend John Ross were a force to be reckoned with and together they contributed hugely to the progress that I think we are now beginning to witness in our museum.

Michael would openly tell you that, as far as Christian belief and understanding went, he was agnostic, but in every way he practised the values taught by Christ. He was an example to all who profess their Christianity, practising the utmost propriety in everything he did, and never judging those of us who failed.

I'm sure everyone who knew Mike will never forget his dedication together with his wonderful humour and loyalty. To all who have been able to say that Mike was a friend it has been a huge privilege, and I'm sure we who have been so very fortunate will treasure those memories.

God bless you, our dear friend. I was able to learn so much from you, and for that I am so grateful.

Michael Williams, Chairman of the Trustees

Not such a load of old rubbish!

Nobody likes to see a load of detritus washed up on our beautiful beaches. However, we can enjoy artwork created from such items, as illustrated by the piece on the Museum wall created some years ago. The desire for creativity still continues. See the inset black box by Martin White, local artist and Chairman of the Friends.



Current art exhibition 11 May–22 June

Rachel Rasmussen

TENBY TREASURES: NOSTALGIC BRUSHSTROKES

Rachel is a local artist. *Tenby Treasures: Nostalgic Brushstrokes* is her first solo exhibition in her hometown of Tenby.

Rachel's work is a reflection of what she loves most about nature: seascapes, landscapes, dramatic skies, evocative reflections. The painting of pebbles has become a trademark of hers.



Rachel, who was born and brought up in Tenby, is self-taught. She loves to paint the South Wales coastline, in the hope of creating a feeling of nostalgia for the viewer.

Rachel now lives in Cardiff, with her husband and four children. As well as being a full-time mother, she chases spare time painting, teaching classes and exhibiting her work.

Art Shows remaining for 2024

29 June – 31 July

Anita Woods

7 August – 27 September

Neil Carroll

5 October – 19 November

Anya Ward

27 November – 8 December

Friends Art Auction on Friday 6 December

13 December – 23 January 2025

Festival of Contemporary Art

FRIENDS!

Comments and suggestions are always welcome, whether about the museum, the Friends themselves or this newsletter.

Please email them to

friendsoftenby@btinternet.com.

And keep up to date by visiting the museum's website, www.tenbymuseum.org.uk, or its Facebook page.

Tenby Museum and Art Gallery, Castle Hill,
TENBY SA70 7BP. Tel: 01834 842809