



FIGHTING FOR THE FEDERATION

The recent discussions about the future of the Federation have sparked debate about the pros and cons of re-branding or changing the name of the Fed. Andrew Deathe thinks we should keep the name we have. He explains why he's fighting for the Federation. On page two Emma Chaplin tells us why we need to think again.

*"I lost my heart to a starship trooper,
Flashing lights in hyper space.
Fighting for the Federation.
Hand in hand we'll conquer space!"*



A Starship Trooper
pictured yesterday

You don't have to be Sarah Brightman singing campy 80s pop or a crew-member of the Starship Enterprise to realise that a Federation is a great organisation to be with. But it is also a great name. I would argue against any name change for our organisation because it already operates under a powerful name, a venerable name and a tried and tested name.

A Federation - A common goal

There are several Museum Federations across Britain and they have been a lobbying and supporting force for the profession for a long time. The word 'Federation' describes them perfectly; organisations where many smaller units come together to act under a single alliance, whilst retaining their independent identity. A Federation shows a common goal and aim without crushing or submerging the diverse natures of its constituent parts. The Welsh Federation of Museums and Art Galleries includes representatives of all types of institution – Local Authority, National, Independent, Military, University – and provides services and a voice to all of them.

An alliance to protect common interests

Because of the number of Federations across Britain they provide a recognisable group of support bodies for museum staff moving into new areas. If we all take on fancy and clever new names, a part of that wider, welcoming identity is lost and we will find it harder to recruit new members. The Welsh Federation of Museums and Art Galleries may not be a snappy, trendy name or a useful acronym but it does exactly what it says on the tin. It's for museums. It's for Art Galleries. It's a Federation, an alliance to protect common interests, a supportive group of like-minded individuals. The minute we change to something shorter and 'clever', we'll be wasting half our time explaining who we are and what we are about.

The Federation is about to take on a more dynamic role representing the voices of the Welsh museums and galleries to CyMAL, Resource and the wider world. I say that we should go into that role proudly under the banner of a Federation. Keep the name and we too will conquer space! (or at least Aberystwyth).



FIGHTING FOR THE FEDERATION

Emma Chaplin suggests A New Name for a New Start?

Have you ever tried to explain what 'going to a Federation meeting' means to a host of smirking librarians and archivists who have already asked whether Spock and Captain Kirk will also be attending? This Star Trek confusion isn't necessarily a good thing. Who knows, maybe some of the gaps in our membership are due to people's fears about the need to converse in fluent Klingon?

This is a time for a new start for the Federation - new aims and objectives and a new resolve to represent our members in the changing Welsh political landscape. The spirit of inclusiveness for all types of museum and gallery remains with the reborn organisation but the name doesn't necessarily have to be quite so inclusive of so many words - after all, is The Federation of Museums and Art Galleries in Wales or the Welsh Federation of Art Galleries and Museums? We're getting into Monty Python territory here.

Short and snappy can be good - both as a marketing tool as we look to widen our membership and as a calling card when we deal with a host of new partner organisations, in CyMAL and across libraries and archives. New names don't have to be obscure and unfathomable. I'm not suggesting that we go down the Consignia route! For a start, we don't have enough money to fund such a £100k re-branding exercise that results in the Federation being called something that no-one quite understands. But something like 'Museums Wales' or 'Museums in Wales' - fairly snappy and straightforward aren't they?

Ultimately it's up to the members though. If you want a new name, now is the time to start thinking and suggesting. If not, well, maybe the people at CyMAL will all be Trekkies...

...UPDATE...FUTURE OF THE FEDERATION...UPDATE...

Following the decision to wind down CMW and the launch of CyMAL, members of the Executive Committee have taken the opportunity to reconsider the role and activities of the Federation. Members of the Federation have had the opportunity to voice their views and the following is an update of the situation so far and the road ahead.

Open Discussion

Members of the Federation were invited to an open meeting in May to discuss four options open to the organisation (see Y Mag May 2003 for details). Following group presentations on each of the four options it was agreed that the Federation should re-constitute itself to develop a new organisation. It was thought that this radical change would provide a new strong voice for the Federation and a chance to provide input into CyMAL and WAG policies. The Federation would then act as an advocacy body for museums and art galleries in Wales. It would also provide the Federation with the opportunity to apply for Charity Status and therefore be able to accept money from various sources (including any funds from CMW) and to fund activities.

What next ?

As a result it was agreed that members of the Executive Committee draft a new constitution for the Federation. This would be used to ensure that the educational role of the Federation (necessary for Charitable Status) satisfies the Charity Commission and speeds up the

application process. It was also agreed that the draft Statement of Purpose that had been circulated in Y Mag (May 2003) needed further work and that a draft Business Plan for the new look Fed be prepared.

Your say

Members of the Executive Committee have prepared the documents listed above. Some have already benefited from input from members but others still require further work. The AGM (22nd October, Welshpool, details enclosed), is an opportunity for all members to contribute to the final stages of forming the new Federation. At the meeting the new constitution will be presented as well as the draft business plan. The constitution document has been circulated to members and the business plan is enclosed with Y Mag along with other papers. Please take this opportunity to look through these documents and note any comments you may have. It is planned to approve the new constitution at the AGM and a further inaugural meeting of the new Federation will be held in December or early next year to elect a new committee.

Victoria Newton-Davies



Federation of Welsh Museums and Art Galleries Proposed Business Plan 2003-6

With your copy of Y Mag you will find a copy of the proposed business plan for the Federation. It incorporates the revised aims and objectives and some information on how the new organisation might operate. It is very briefly summarised below but please take the opportunity to look at the fuller version as some key decisions regarding the focus and operations of the organisation need to be discussed at the AGM as this will be the opportunity for you to contribute directly to the business plan.

Introduction and Purpose of the Plan

Since its inception, the Federation has responded to the dynamics of the museum sector in Wales. Today, the need to continue to do so has never been greater. With the imminent demise of CMW and the birth of CyMAL, coupled with a flagging national profile and modest membership, the Federation recognises that it must undergo a renaissance, if it is to survive. This process has already begun with the revision of its constitution, the submission of applications for Charitable Trust Status and the creation of a new mission and five year business plan. This will pave the way towards a revived, vibrant and sustainable national organisation, that fills the vacuum left by the demise of CMW.

Summary of Actions

Obtain support for the business plan from the membership at the 2003 AGM

Mission and key aims

- * Adhere to the Development aims

Financial Information

- * Look at increasing individual and institutional membership.
- * Select a suitable model to link subscription rates to the turnover of individual museums.
- * Better utilisation of the Cefni Barnett Fund.
- * Look towards applying for possible sources of grant aid.
- * Increase the reserve of the Federation.

Partnerships

- * Establish and strengthen partnerships with a range of museum organizations.
- * Establish and strengthen working relations with a range of heritage organisations.

Marketing

- * Embark on a major membership drive.
- * Send out Y Mag to non-members.
- * Invest in a publishing package.
- * Obtain articles from archivists and librarians and users of museums.
- * Include a job section.
- * Re-launch the website.
- * Appoint 'webmaster'.

Emma Chaplin, Chris Morgan,
Frank Olding, Rachael Rogers
September 2003



NEW APPOINTMENTS

Peter Roberts joins The Egypt Centre

Peter Roberts began volunteer work at The Egypt Centre in February 2002 through Pathways Training at Neath College.

Subsequently an opportunity presented itself to The Egypt Centre in the form of a grant from Work Steps, which offers funding to work places in order for them to employ adults with learning difficulties. Peter started work as an official Egypt Centre paid member of staff on April 2003. Every four months, there is an evaluation as part of an on-going programme and the Egypt Centre hopes to continue to receive funding for another two years.

Peter's work involves looking after visitors, answering questions and maintaining the presentation of the gallery. Peter is studying aspects of Egyptology and Egyptian Material Culture and is attending "Masterclasses" as part of his ongoing training. He is also studying Egyptian Hieroglyphs. He has recently been awarded a certificate signed by the First Secretary for 200 hours of voluntary work at the Centre and has been included in a news broadcast in connection with his work at the centre.

**Mike Lewis realises he can afford the toll on Newport's Transporter Bridge****Mike Lewis to join Newport City Council**

Mike Lewis is to leave his post as Curator of Swansea Museum to take up a new role as Museums and Heritage Officer in Newport on 20th October 2003. Mike will be head of Newport City's Museums and Heritage Service. Mike has been at Swansea for over 16 years, starting as a technician in the Maritime and Industrial Museum. Having seen the service through several major changes, he has been a tireless worker over the past couple of years to help bring the National Waterfront Museum to the city. Swansea's loss is definitely Newport's gain but staff in both cities wish him all the best for the future.

Liz Braby also joins Newport

Newport Museums and Heritage Service is pleased to welcome Liz Braby as Community Memories Project Officer. Liz is moving to Newport from the Ragged School Museum in London to take up her post on 13th October. The Community Memories Project Officer is a new post, funded by the Welsh Assembly through Cymorth and aims to work with Black and Minority Ethnic groups in Newport.



NEWS

Carwyn Price and Peredur Hughes join the Welsh Slate Museum

Carwyn Price, 29 years old, became the Museum's youngest Quarryman when he joined the staff team earlier this year. Having served his apprenticeship at Penrhyn Quarry in Bethesda - still a thriving slate quarry exporting slate throughout the world - he has joined a busy front of house team at the Museum, with visitors delighting in the fact that a younger person is so obviously competent in an age old craft skill.

Following the retirement of Museum moulder Elwyn Jones, Peredur Hughes has been appointed as a Carpenter, bringing to life another of the Museum's crafts skills. He'll be spending the next few weeks setting up a workshop at the Museum, and is at present busily engaged in acquiring a range of appropriate machinery and hand tools.

The Museum was visited last week by the Keeper of the Slate Valley Museum in Granville, New York, USA, Ms Mary Lou Willitts. Shown round the Museum by Keeper, Dr Dafydd Roberts, Ms Willitts had spent a fortnight in north Wales getting to understand the background to an industry which, in the late nineteenth century, saw many hundreds of quarrymen - anxious to



Line Hallbjørnsson

My name is Line Hallbjørnsson and yes I am foreign. To be precise I am from wonderful Copenhagen. So what made me leave such a wonderful place? Well, in 1999 I thought it was time to seek pastures green and I wanted to become a conservator. I soon found that Denmark was simply too small for me, so I sailed across the sea like my forefathers before me, and went ashore in the old Dane law. Here I enrolled at De Montfort University in Lincoln to study Conservation and Restoration. For 3 years I slaved away and I befriended many local people.

In 2002 I finally had solid proof of my ingenious mind and decided to head south to warmer climate. After a long hard struggle the Brummies came to my rescue and I was employed as Assistant Conservator at Birmingham City Council's new collection centre. The Brummies were friendly people but there one day, as if by magic I saw my dream job advertised. I once again packed my bags and bid my friends farewell to head further south, into land unknown, where the unruly Celt rule.

My foreign way seemed to go down well with these Welsh and they offered me a place in their circle, which I humbly accepted. I have now worked for Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council as County Collections Officer, based at Cynon Valley Museum And Gallery for 3 months. My new colleagues are slowly getting used to my northern tongue while I am still struggling with theirs. I thoroughly enjoy a challenge and this is what I got. Luckily everybody has been very friendly and helpful and the County Museums Officer, Chris Wilson, is forever sending me on courses to enhance my knowledge and give me a chance to meet people. If you do meet me at one of these courses or seminars, I hope you will introduce

Robert Pearce

I started work on the 1st September at the Museum of Welsh Life as the new Agriculture and Crafts Conservator. I studied at Durham on the conservation of historic objects course, with a one year placement in 1994 in the Department of Archaeology and Numismatics Conservation Laboratory at the National Museum of Wales. This was followed by four years contract work for organisations such as English Heritage and The Science Museum. I am happier dealing with metals than most other materials but having just spent five years as a conservator at the Pitt Rivers Museum (Oxford) I have experience of a wide range of materials. My main areas of interest are pest management and collections care, which I'm sure will be of use in my new post.



Discovering Welsh Ethnography

A one day seminar at the Museum of Welsh Life, St Fagans

This was a popular event and attracted a very different audience from the usual Museum Ethnographer Group meetings - most of the participants were curators and others with responsibility for small ethnographic collections in Wales, rather than the 'usual suspects'. Participants came from as far afield as Newport, Swansea, Welshpool, Lampeter, Aberystwyth and Chepstow, but the two hour trek from London to Cardiff perhaps proved too daunting for others! It was a gloriously sunny day for visiting an outdoor museum and we met in the very attractive Oakdale Workman's Institute, reconstructed from its original location in a South Wales valley.

Social History or Ethnography?

The meeting had two inter-related aims: firstly, to make contact between MEG and non-specialist museums in Wales with responsibility for foreign ethnography collections; secondly, to explore relationships between 'social history', 'folk lore' and 'ethnography' and how these similarities and differences can inform ways of working with these collections. Given the identity of the participants, the question which most people wanted to explore was how to make good use of their small and marginalised ethnographic collections. The morning session began with an introduction to St. Fagans by Christine Stevens, Curator of Domestic and Rural Collections. This was followed by the opportunity to explore St.Fagans for ourselves - many people were keen to find buildings transferred from their own part of Wales, while the 1950s prefabricated bungalow was also a great attraction.

Discovering Welsh Ethnography

The afternoon session began with four presentations which gave a flavour of the fate of ethnographic items in non-specialist Museums. Pam Berridge from the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, introduced the ethnographic collections held by their School of Art, which she had recently photographed and catalogued. Further talks were given by Eva Bredsdorff of the Museum of Local History and Industry, Llanidloes and the Powysland Museum, Welshpool, and by Ann Dorsett and Gavin Evans from the Carmarthenshire museums service. Bernice Cardy from Swansea Museum spoke about using ethnographic collections in projects with local ethnic minority communities and asylum seekers.

These talks brought to light the extent to which foreign ethnography collections have been neglected over the years, but also the enthusiasm which exists to make better use of them. The afternoon concluded with Len Pole's introduction to MEG's new ethical guidance notes, followed by discussion.

Ethnography in Focus

The meeting brought into focus the history and current situation of ethnographic collections in Wales. Parallels between early collecting practices in Welsh folk life and foreign ethnography were evident - in both cases the collectors, often the same people and usually from privileged classes, saw themselves as saving material culture of 'others' which would otherwise have been lost. We learned that Newport Museum and Art Gallery holds a sizeable ethnography collection at Tredegar House, the subject of a recent thesis by a Leicester University Museum Studies student. Although the National Museums and Galleries of Wales no longer collects foreign ethnography, having transferred its collections to the Horniman Museum after WWII, a few dozen items remain at the National Museum and Gallery in Cardiff. There is, however, a new museum in Bute Town, which is working towards registration and just beginning to form contemporary and historic collections relating to multicultural Cardiff. Rowena Hill of Monmouthshire Museum Service gave us inspiring examples of the use of ethnographic items in conjunction with social history collections, to address trans-culturalism in a rural Welsh context. Perhaps the future of small ethnographic collections in Wales lies in multicultural education.

A Future Survey

The meeting reached a consensus that a survey of foreign ethnography collections in Wales would be highly beneficial to all concerned, perhaps with support from CMW (soon to be CyMAL). Some of the collections are perhaps too small to be useful in their own right, and curators lack the specialist knowledge to make full use of them, but they could come into their own as part of a wider resource. The prospect of a MEG study tour of Welsh ethnography collections also came into clearer focus, with some participants offering their help and support. The Aberystwyth collections, for example, hold several hundred items and would merit a MEG identification visit.

Tabitha Cadbury
Curatorial Assistant for Anthropology



**ARTEFACTS GALORE!
COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT ACROSS THE U.K.
Society of Museum Archaeologists' Annual Conference
National Museum & Gallery Cardiff 6th - 8th November 2003**

Federation members are invited to attend the Society of Museum Archaeologists' Annual Conference, which comes to Wales for the first time in seventeen years.

This year has seen some important developments in archaeology across the U.K:

- The All-Party Parliamentary Archaeology Group, chaired by Lord Redesdale, has published its report
- The Portable Antiquities Scheme has received funding from HLF and others to extend the Scheme across the whole of England and Wales
- The Archaeological Archives Forum for England has been established
- The survey of archaeological archives in Wales has been published
- Progress has been made towards the formation of CyMAL, Museums, Archives and Libraries Wales.

These initiatives, and others, have provided plenty of ideas for conference themes and speakers. The conference, titled 'Artefacts Galore, Collections Management Across the U.K.', has three main themes.

The National Perspective

The first of these, *The National Perspective*, will focus on four National Museums. Leslie Webster (British Museum), Richard Brewer (NMGW), David Clarke (National Museums of Scotland) and Andy Halpin (National Museum of Ireland) will speak about the approach to collections management issues in National Museums. We will hear about new initiatives in the Nationals, not only about priorities in collection care, but in improving access as well. To conclude this session, Emmeline Leary, Museums Standards Advisor of Resource in London, will report on how Resource supports the work being undertaken on archaeological collections in museums.

In the evening, attention will turn to the Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Archaeology Group when the chairman of the Working Group, Lord Redesdale, will deliver the keynote address. He will update the conference on aspects of the report and about its implementation across the U.K. We hope to follow this presentation with a discussion on how the museum sector can contribute to and benefit from initiatives arising from the report.

Learning from other Domains

The second day leads into new waters of cross-disciplinary working in Wales with the theme, *Learning from other Domains*. The idea of museums learning from initiatives undertaken in the libraries and archives sectors will be explored. Hilary Malaws (RCAHMW) and Gayle Evans (Head of Documentation, NMGW) will speak on the information and data management sides of archiving.

Whilst one project, *Gathering the Jewels*, is now drawing to a conclusion, SWISH (Shared Web Information Services for Heritage) is about to commence. The third presentation in this session, by librarian Jean Everitt, will look at how archaeologists might learn from the experiences of the *Mapping Wales* project recently completed by the University of Wales Aberystwyth and National Library of Wales.

Storing our Past

The final theme, *Storing our Past: Collections Care Leads to Access*, takes us back to the underpinning theme of archaeological collections. Jane Henderson and Phil Parkes have recently completed a consultation report following a detailed survey of the management of and access to archaeological collections in Wales. They will present the results of this work and will outline the recommendations they are making for the future care and use of the important archaeological resource in Wales. In England a similar survey was undertaken in 1998 and the resulting report prepared by Hedley Swain has led to new initiatives in tackling specific issues in England. Hedley will update us on this work by speaking about the new Archaeological Archives Forum for England.

In Practice

The conference will then conclude with some very specific case studies which will demonstrate how increased care and documentation of collections can lead to exciting access initiatives. This session will include talks on the NMGW's survey of its archaeological collections by Penny Hill and myself and Steve Burrow's new web-based and publication initiatives. The Local Museum perspective of presenting collections information on the web will be given by Bernice Cardy, who will speak on the influence the website developed by Swansea Museums is having on research. Storage is a topic close to Kate Hunter's heart at the moment, with the challenge of the discovery of the Newport Ship and the need to set up a store for the timbers at short notice prior to their conservation. A similar situation arose in Bristol when a popular public access project led to the reconstruction in the Museum of the Newton St Loe Roman mosaic. At the end of the project Gail Boyle was left with the challenge of storing a huge reconstructed object without a budget: we will discover how she coped! The conference will also look at the roles of research databases and will hear about initiatives in the West Midlands in the presentations by Tim Bridges, Angie Bolton and Victoria Bryant.

Don't delay, book your place using the yellow booking form in Y Mag.

Elizabeth A. Walker
Collections Manager
Department of Archaeology & Numismatics
National Museums & Galleries of Wales



NOTICES

Ffederasiwn Amgueddfeydd ac Orielau Celf Cymru
Federation of Museums and Galleries of Wales

Talks on Partnerships and AGM

Wednesday 22nd October 2003

at

Powys Council Offices, Severn Street, Welshpool
The Council Chamber

Programme

10.30	Tea/coffee
11.00-11.05	Welcome and introduction by The President
11.05-12.45	"Partnerships" Topical talks by Linda Tomos, CyMAL Susan Edwards, Glamorgan County Record Office Andrew Green, The National Library of Wales Mike Tooby, The National Museums & Galleries of Wales
12.45-13.00	Questions/ Debate
13.00-14.15	Lunch
14.15-15.00	AGM Agenda 1 Apologies 2 Minutes of the AGM for 2002 3 Matters arising 4 Officers Reports 5 Election of Officers and Committee 6 AOB Presentation of the draft business plan and discussion on the future of the Federation
15.00	Tea and departure

We very much hope that you will be able to join us on what should be an interesting and useful day.

Eva Bredsdorff and Michael Freeman
Events Officer Secretary

STOP PRESS...Y MAG NEEDS YOU...STOP PRESS

YMAG is your newsletter and even more so now as the Fed goes through some exciting changes in the next few months.

We need your articles on exciting developments, projects and new faces in Museum and Art Galleries in Wales. We accept all subjects for articles and love digital images as well. Any ideas for new features or topics for YMAG will be welcomed by your editors, who, for the last edition were forced to come up with very frivolous subjects due to lack of articles including:

- * How to be glamorous and still work in museum stores
- * Agony Aunt Page... how to solve those storage problems

As the Fed aims to be taken more seriously in the Museum scene in Wales, such frivolity needs to be stopped. This can only happen if the editors are bombarded with ideas, subjects and articles. Please send your contributions to Victoria Newton-Davies or Rachael Anderton at Newport Museum and Art Gallery.
E-mail: victoria.newton@newport.gov.uk or rachael.anderton@newport.gov.uk

Designed by Richard Davies, Department of Industry, National Museums & Galleries of Wales

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