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Hello and welcome!

In this edition we see the return of the Coffin of Ankhpakhered to The Egypt Centre and how students play a vital role in conservation. We also have an interesting insight into the newly launched podcast from The Royal Mint Museum, plus more.

There is lots to offer in Wales and even more to be learned from one another.

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Return of the Coffin of Ankhpakhered to The Egypt Centre



Image of the Coffin of Ankhpakhered – Left - Lid Outside, Right – Base ©The Egypt Centre

On Wednesday 31st July, the anthropoid coffin of a man called Ankhpakhered was returned to the Egypt Centre after twenty-six years of conservation work at Cardiff University. The coffin was gifted to the Egypt Centre in 1997 from the Aberystwyth University. Details about its history are a little sketchy, although it is known that it was present in Aberystwyth by at least 1910. The museum acquisition record for 1900–1901 contains the following record, which might be related to this coffin: “An Egyptian mummy. Presented by Mr. James Wilson (Wilson Bey, Cairo), per Mr. Thomas Davies, J. P. Bootle.” The coffin was used as a storage box at one time, with other Egyptian objects placed in it for safekeeping.

The coffin is made of planks of wood joined together with dowels. It is covered with textile to create a smooth surface, which was then painted with decoration.

When the coffin arrived in Swansea, it was in a very poor state of preservation. The face of the lid was hanging off, the sides of the base had collapsed, and much of the textile decoration was already detached. It was also covered in layers of dirt and grime, including “Chambers” being written on the lid in white chalk. The coffin had to be painstakingly cleaned, reconstructed, and consolidated to prevent it from deteriorating further.

It is decorated on both the exterior and interior. On the exterior of the lid, the goddess Nut kneels with her wings outstretched across the chest of the deceased. Ten deities are depicted over four registers in the lower half of the lid. On the interior of the lid (fig. 4), a large polychrome figure of Nut is included. Four columns of hieroglyphs to the right of her identify the owner as Ankhpakhered, son of Padiese and Tawer. Above the figure of the goddess is a so-called “Nut Text”, emphasising the role of the goddess as a mother to the deceased.

The interior and exterior of the trough is decorated with a large *djed* pillar with a crown consisting of a solar disk flanked by *uraei* atop the horns of a ram (fig. 5). The *djed* pillar represents the backbone of the god Osiris, so its location on the base of the interior of the trough is rather fitting.

The coffin has an interesting history with multiple occupants. At an unknown date, perhaps the Ptolemaic Period (c. 305–30 BC), the coffin was usurped for a man called Djedher, a Stolist at Akhmim, who was the son of Harsiese (also a Stolist at Akhmim) and Ibi. The usurpations are evident on the exterior of the lid only. The white patches indicate where the name of Ankhpakhered was covered over in order for the new owner’s name to be added. The titles of Djedher might suggest that the coffin was transferred from Thebes to Akhmim for reuse, although this is by no means certain.

When the coffin arrived in Swansea in 1997, it contained bits of cartonnage in a very poor state of preservation. These were also conserved by students at Cardiff with two of the three pieces now on display within the House of Death Gallery. Stylistically, the cartonnage dates to the Ptolemaic Period, so perhaps they belonged to Djedher? If only things were so straightforward! As mentioned previously, the archives in Aberystwyth mention a mummy. This appears to have been kept in the coffin until 1963 when it was sent to St. Thomas' Hospital in London in order to be examined. Despite the coffin belonging to two men, the body belonged to that of a woman! Could the cartonnage thus have belonged to her? The mummy was later given by Dr Dick Kittermaster, a pathologist at St. Thomas' Hospital, to Uplands Academy (formerly Uplands Community College) in Wadhurst. While here, the body was re-examined by Professor Rosalie David of the KNH Centre in Manchester. What is unclear is whether the coffin and the mummy were donated to Aberystwyth at the same time.

During its time in Cardiff, over fifty students spent more than 1,000 hours cleaning, conserving, and analysing the coffin. All of this took place under the watchful eye of Prof. Phil Parkes, who guided the students every step of the way. Several dissertations have been written on the coffin, including an analysis of the pigments (Jenny Gosling) and the varnish layer (Deborah Magnoler).

This is not the end of the story though. Since the coffin returned to the Egypt Centre, it has been photographed and 3D scanned. While it is now in storage, future plans are for the coffin to go on display in the House of Death gallery at the Egypt Centre. Additionally, a full publication on the assemblage (coffin, cartonnage, and human remains) is planned, bringing together research on the history, construction, decoration, conservation, scientific analysis, palaeography, and other disciplines.

We would like to thank all the staff and students, past and present, who worked on the coffin over the past twenty-six years.

Dr Ken Griffin – *Curator* - k.griffin@swansea.ac.uk



Students working on the Coffin of Ankhpakhered ©The Egypt Centre



Image of the Coffin of Ankhpakhered – Left Base Inside, Right– Lid Inside ©The Egypt Centre

Coins and the Sea - A Royal Mint Museum Podcast



Living in an era of strained budgets and contested narratives reaching, and engaging with, new audiences has never been more important for museums. In an effort to do this, the Royal Mint Museum is increasingly looking to embrace the online world and, in particular, podcasting.

Since the autumn of last year we have been hard at work planning and developing our first podcast series, Coins and the Sea, which we hope will reach a new, more digitally focussed, audience.

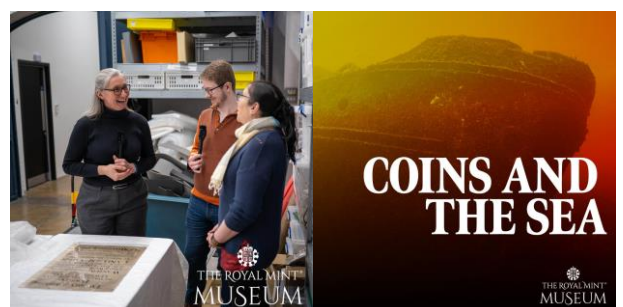
Aimed at those with an interest in general history, Britain's rich maritime heritage has been chosen as the perfect theme to expand the reach of the collection beyond that of the traditional numismatic audience. It has allowed us to explore our nation's relationship with the sea and to examine how that connection has shaped our coinage. Whether this is a direct and obvious link, in the form of images of ships on coins, or in slightly more obscure interactions between trade and the production of coinage, our link with the sea has had a far-reaching impact.

Hosted by Chris Barker, Information and Research Manager, over six episodes he and the team use their own expertise and specialist knowledge of the Royal Mint Museum's collection to add depth and context to stories as varied as shipwrecks, life onboard ship, through to the myth and allure of pirates. Each episode is approximately 45 – 50 minutes and more than a dozen special guests have been interviewed to help bring the subject matter to life. The exciting job of interviewing the expert guests began with a trip to Portsmouth in February. The Museum's roving reporters, David Mason and Susie Sandford, first visited the National Museum of the Royal Navy to speak to Senior Curator, Victoria Ingles, about life at sea and the realities of press gangs, before navigating their way across the dockyard to the Mary Rose Museum.

There they were treated to a gallery tour by Curator, Hannah Matthews and Head of Research, Alex Hildred. Conversation ranged from the difficulties of diving on the Mary Rose, her life as the flag ship of Henry VIII and what the remains of her crew can tell us about the diversity of Tudor England, with a spot of myth-busting along the way.

Interviewing has continued throughout spring, other contributors including Portland Museum, the British Museum, Deputy Receiver of Wreck, Sir Christopher Frayling and Dr Richard Blakemore to name but a few. Episodes were finally completed in June this year and work has continued to develop supporting information to add to the Museum's website, including images, articles for further reading, links to additional content and

biographies of the guests. Launching on 2nd September 2024 it is hoped that this new approach to content creation proves popular and it is anticipated that another series, based on a new topic, will be released next year. You can listen to the episodes from wherever you get your podcasts, or via the Museum's website at <https://www.royalmintmuseum.org.uk/podcast/>.



As this is a new venture for us, please do feel free to share your thoughts and opinions on the episodes, a summary of each can be found below.

Episode 1: Maritime Imagery

Britain's naval heritage has had a lasting impact on its currency for centuries. In this episode, we explore the story of British naval history through coins of the past.

Episode 2: Britannia

From pub signs to punk art, the robed and armed female figure of Britannia permeates British identity. Find out how this Classical figure developed through coinage and medallic art to become a figure of the nation.

Episode 3: Maritime Trade

The golden age of sail gave way to a world of global trade, where gold and silver could be sold internationally for vast profit. Explore how the money made from, and used for, this trade shaped British history.

Episode 4: Life on Board Ship

Whether sailing, trading or something less legitimate, those who lived and worked on the seas expected payment for their labour. How would sailors have been paid and, more importantly, when?

Episode 5: Shipwrecks

The allure of shipwrecks has drawn treasure hunters and historians alike, but what happens to the cargo they carry? This episode uncovers what happens when gold and silver are recovered from beneath the waves.

Episode 6: Booty!

Pirates, privateers and general rogues of the sea have been long associated with chests overflowing with coins. But did they really make their fortunes in shining silver and are chests of treasure still out there waiting to be found?

Susan Sandford - Digital Engagement and Collections Access
Officer susan.sandford@royalmintmuseum.org.uk



A Collection of Historic Rubbish found in Tredegar House in 2024

This year, Aled one of the Collections Assistants at Tredegar House, had discovered a large collection of finds attributed to Tredegar's St Joseph's High School era (1951-1974). The collection is estimated to be up to 500 objects & all have been found inside a windowsill in the New Hall. The windowsill has large gaps in & splits in the wood it so you can easily put stuff in it. The room used to be an Assembly Room/Main Hall during the St Joseph's High School era (1951-1974).

In this room school children would be congregating, leaning on windowsills & also doing graffiti (Aled's other project consists of photographing graffiti throughout the Mansion). So, they would have easily stuffed their rubbish in the gaps.

The pictures include a small selection of the collection found, which includes a mix of School objects (notes, music, pens, pencils, bus tickets) & lots of sweet, chocolate & crisp wrappers.

Aled's favourite is a suspected Truancy note (object no. 4). The note reads "Dear Sister Sarto, Please can you...". Note ends suddenly, which indicates it may have been quickly hidden by the pupil before being discovered by a nun/teacher. We also know from one of our volunteers (who was one of the teachers) that Sister Sarto taught Geography. In terms of wrappers, the collection consists of pretty much the entire Mars product range (including Wrigleys products), lots of Trebor sweets, a few Cadbury's or Fry's & lots of Burton's biscuits (including two Wagon Wheels from 1960's). Crisp or snack wrappers include Golden Wonder, Smiths & KP Nuts.

Other finds include Weston's Biscuits & Lovells. Both companies are local to Newport area (Llantarnam for Weston's, & off Albany St, Northern Newport for Lovells). Lovell's Lemon Chew & Lovell's Milky Lunch feature amongst the finds.

Tredegar is planning to display our Sweet wrapper collection as part of our 1950-80s Christmas Display in the Below Stairs areas.

Aled Lewis - Collections Assistant - Tredegar House -
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St Joseph Rubbish Christmas Display ©TredegarHouse-NationalTrust



'What Makes Monmouth, Monmouth?' consultation and co-curation at Monlife Museums 2023 - 2025



Feedback map of Monmouth and activity area
©MonLife

In 2023, Monlife Museums Service was delighted to receive an award from the National Lottery Heritage Fund's 'Dynamic Collections' fund. This funded organisations working on engagement, re-interpretation and improving management of collections.

The project involved a large-scale inventory of the collections in Monmouth, to prepare them for a move from the old museum building, to the Shire Hall, a historic courthouse also run by Monlife.

Alongside the inventory we carried out community engagement work, bringing groups together to ask them 'what makes Monmouth, Monmouth'? This resulted in two community co-curated exhibitions, one in the Shire Hall Museum and one that is touring different community venues in Monmouth.

To find out what local people thought about Monmouth, we held workshops with five groups. In these we encouraged multiple points of view by including both long-time visitors and supporters and those who had not been previously represented in the museum. This included: people of diverse heritage, people with disabilities, people from the LGBTQIA+ community, young people, and Ukrainians living in Monmouth. We discussed with each group which topics of Monmouth's history were most interesting to them. Popular themes included: the natural environment, shopping, entertainment, school, healthcare, history, tourism, and community.

Our collections team picked out a variety of fascinating objects from the collection in response to each participant's interests. Participants chose objects for display that interested them and reflected their experiences of Monmouth. They also gave a personal story for display beside each object. We wanted to go beyond the traditional 'curators voice' and to highlight personal stories of local people from different cultures and backgrounds, who all hold different perspectives of what makes Monmouth, Monmouth.



Monlife staff with groups in sessions selecting objects for the exhibition
©MonLife

These stories with the participants name and image are displayed prominently beside each object in the museum and in a flipbook of stories in the touring exhibition. Visitors to both exhibitions are encouraged to leave their own memories of Monmouth on feedback boards. This project has fed into the development of key themes for the new Shire Hall Museum development project, also funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The touring exhibition has enabled us to reach new audiences and gain feedback from the wider community. Since June it has been in the Monmouth Library and Hub, Leisure Centre and Comprehensive School and will continue touring until March 2025.

The exhibition also was put online and can be accessed on Monlife Collections website: [Dynamic Collections | The National Lottery Heritage Fund \(monlifecollections.co.uk\)](https://monlifecollections.co.uk) where it is available in Welsh, English and Ukrainian.

'What Makes Monmouth, Monmouth' can be seen at the Shire Hall Museum until 31 March 2025. The Shire Hall is open 11 – 4 daily except Wednesday and Sunday. The touring exhibition will be at St James's Hall in Wyesham from 21 October – 11 November and at Bridges Community Centre from 11 November – 6 January.

Caroline Haines - Collections Engagement Assistant MonLife - carolinehaines@monmouthshire.gov.uk



Exhibition at the Shire Hall museum ©MonLife



Left - Touring exhibition at Monmouth Leisure Centre Right - Touring exhibition at Monmouth Library and Hub ©MonLife

Museum Data Service launches with over half a million object records from Welsh museums



Professor Ross Parry, Director of the University of Leicester's Institute for Digital Culture, at the official launch.
Photo: James Winspear. (image file MDS-launch-Ross-Parry)

The Museum Data Service, a new service bringing together museum collections data from across the UK, launched on 12th September, with over 3 million object records, including over half a million from Welsh museums. The service was launched in London, with an opening speech from Minister of State for Creative Industries, Arts and Tourism, and MP for Rhondda and Ogmore, Sir Chris Bryant.

Amgueddfa Cymru was an early adopter for Museum Data Service, and, along with the collections at Aberystwyth University's School of Art Museums and Galleries, they accounted for 610,730 of the object records available to search across at the launch. Already, the Museum Data Service (MDS) is in conversation with more museum across Wales, and we are actively seeking more Welsh museums to join.

MDS is free to join and allows museums to contribute their collections to the wider cultural heritage landscape for the UK, helping to break down the individual siloes that collections data can often find itself in. There is no minimum standard for joining, and MDS does not edit any of the data that is uploaded. The Spectrum Units of Information are used to help align the data, so that users can search across museum collections more easily.

The service does not include images, avoiding many of the complications that comes with sharing collections. Instead, it focuses on the power of collections metadata for researchers, local historians and for the sector itself. Those who have been involved, or who have had a chance to search the MDS are already noting its potential to support more collaboration between museums, supporting exhibition research, loans, acquisition and disposals.

Expressions of interest are welcome via the MDS website at <https://museumdata.uk/sharing-data/express-interest-in-sharing-data/> and questions are welcomed via the support@museumdata.uk email address.

The creation of the Museum Data Service was enabled by a generous donation from Bloomberg Philanthropies and the financial support of the Arts and Humanities Research Council. The service was developed as a joint venture by Collections Trust, Art UK and the Institute for Digital Culture at the University of Leicester, and now exists as an charitable company with its own board of trustees.

Arran Rees - Museum Data Service | Collections Trust -
Arran@museumdata.uk



2019.12 'Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners' banner made for the 2014 film 'Pride'. MDS record: <http://purl.org/museumdata/objects/f9865533-30f0-33bc-aff1-f7e3e2d257e3> (image file 108627)

Pontypridd Museum: LED Light Transformation

During the summer of 2024, through the support of a Small Grant from the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales and additional funds from Pontypridd Town Council, Pontypridd Museum installed new track lighting, with LED lamps, within its ground floor temporary exhibition gallery. This new system replaced its historic fluorescent tube lighting, which had been installed over the previously broken track lighting.

The museum team raced against the clock to get the new equipment installed before the National Eisteddfod reached Pontypridd in early August. Our Eisteddfod exhibition was the first to be lit by the new Illuma Prospot LED lamps which can be individually focused, dimmed and colour changed from cold blue to warmer tones, depending on the display requirements and required gallery lighting atmosphere. The previous lighting was either on or off and we had no control over the direction of the light, meaning all our displays were flat and poorly lit. The change to our facility has been significant and our ability to properly light objects and interpretation is now under our control. As part of this

exhibition, we wanted to loan the famous Dr. William Price Fox skin hat from Amgueddfa Cymru. The loan agreement had tight lighting requirements, and with our new lighting system we were easily able to reduce the light levels to the required 50 Lux placed on the hat.

The new lighting has allowed us to significantly improve our temporary exhibition displays and also improve the light levels on our pipe organ and permanently display objects on the ground floor. Our local communities have noticed the difference with people who used the building often commenting on "newly" displayed objects which have in actual fact been on display for a long time but were simply lost in the flat lighting.

Nigel Blackmore - Museum Business & Partnerships Manager - Pontypridd Museum - Nigel.Blackmore@pontypriddtowncouncil.gov.uk



Left – Dr. William Price Hat, Right – New Track ©Pontypridd Museum



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