

VALE OF GLAMORGAN
AMBASSADOR



LLYSGENNAD
BRO MORGANNWG

Vale of Glamorgan Arts & Crafts

'The Vale of Glamorgan & Glamorganshire'

Not surprisingly, historical records about the Vale of Glamorgan, often refer to just 'Glamorgan' or Glamorganshire' and each will be mentioned in this account.

Glamorgan or, sometimes, *Glamorganshire* was one of the thirteen historic counties of Wales. It was originally an early medieval petty kingdom of varying boundaries known as Glywysing until taken over by the Normans as a lordship. In later years, Glamorganshire was represented by the three counties of Mid Glamorgan, South Glamorgan and West Glamorgan. The name now survives in Vale of Glamorgan, the most southerly county in Wales, neighbouring those of Cardiff, Bridgend and Rhondda Cynon Taff.

ARTS & CRAFTS

a tradition of making in the Vale

It is in no doubt that the Vale of Glamorgan has inspired poets and writers, painters and authors, from Turner to modern day photographers, yet it is music that remains the strong undercurrent here today, and more recently storytelling. The Vale is home to two internationally renowned festivals, one the *Vale of Glamorgan Music Festival*, the other *Beyond the Border International Storytelling Festival*.

POTTERY HAS ALSO BEEN a prevalent making tradition in the Vale of Glamorgan. The heritage and reputation of the Ewenny Potteries on the boarder of the Vale is known not just across Britain but worldwide amongst ceramics enthusiasts and the tradition continues today.

GLOSSARY OF *Crafty Words*

ENGLISH	WELSH	PHONETICALLY
Craft	Crefft	<i>Krepht</i>
Pottery	Crochenwaith	<i>Kroakh-en-wyeth</i>
Poet	Bardd	<i>Bar-th</i>
Writer	Awdur	<i>Aw-dihr</i>
Musician	Cerddor	<i>Kerth-orrs</i>
Picture	Darlun	<i>Dab-r-lynn</i>



▲ Willow weaving in Monkwood
with "Out to Learn Willow"



▲ Stained glass workshops with Pyramid Glass

CONTEMPORARY

Artists, Places & Spaces

The Vale is a vibrant place for arts. Every town has an art space and these come in all shapes and sizes. From the beautifully restored Pavilion on Penarth Pier to the converted medieval barn that is home to St Donat's Arts Centre along the coast; or there are more traditional theatres and concert hall spaces such as Penarth's Paget Rooms or Memorial Hall in Barry. Regular art exhibitions and activities are programmed at Turner House Ffotogallery and at Art Central in Barry.

For those who like to combine art and landscape there's Coed Hills Rural Artspace near St Hillary, an 80 acre woodland sculpture trail, that continues to evolve alongside an eco-artist community. Almost every village has a choir or a church or community hall that hosts regular arts and music events throughout the year and a thriving community cinema scene.



Pier Pavilion courtesy of PACL ▲ ►

PENARTH PIER PAVILLION

Penarth Pier Pavilion is a fully restored Art Deco Pavilion housing a gallery, cinema, cafe and restaurant. A perfect community meeting place for all which regular hosts exhibitions from local artists and groups and has a thriving cinema and events calendar.



PENARTHS PADGET ROOMS

The Paget Rooms, a historic theatre in the heart of Penarth, built in the early part of the 20th century, is a GRADE II listed building managed by Penarth Town Council. As the town's public hall, it is used for a variety of local and touring events throughout the year. Playing host to a wide number of theatre productions, concerts, dances, coffee mornings, public meetings. Its unique, traditional characteristic features and facilities are regularly adapted for all sorts of community and professional events.



▲ © Gwilym Owen • Flickr

MEMORIAL HALL, BARRY 'MEMO ARTS CENTRE'

The Memo Arts Centre is the largest multi-arts venue in the Vale of Glamorgan, and THE only cinema exhibitor in Barry. It is a vibrant and crucial hub for the local community and those living beyond, known as a friendly, accessible place, where users come to make, see and participate.

The Memo manages and presents professional touring theatre companies, live music, cinema, dance, pantomime, theatre-in-education, workshops and hosts many amateur theatre and community events.

The arts centre is also a popular and unique venue for wedding parties, conferences, award ceremonies and private celebrations, community productions, charitable events and special occasions. There are a range of spaces for hire, along with additional services; hospitality, bar cafe, specialists stage, sound and lighting equipment and business and conference services.



ART CENTRAL, BARRY

Art Central gallery located in the heart of the county is the Vale's prestigious art exhibition space. The exhibition space is a magnificent place to exhibit, visit and appreciate art. Art Central's programme includes a varied selection of art exhibitions by artists, community groups, arts organisations, high profile and touring exhibitions. Our exhibitions are designed to entertain, educate and inspire all ages and interests.

The gallery is accessible to all and admission to exhibitions is free.



ST DONATS ARTS CENTRE

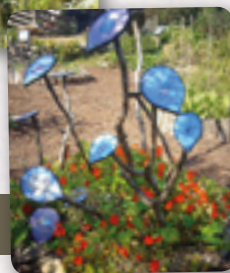
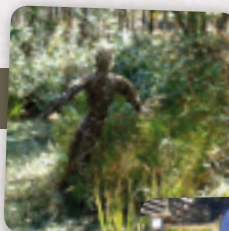
St Donats Arts Centre is an independent arts charity housed within the site of Atlantic College at St Donats Castle.

The Arts Centre is a publicly funded centre of excellence for arts and education in Wales, offering the Vale and its community a high-quality professional arts programme. With its magnificent performance and rehearsal spaces, St Donats Arts Centre is a superb venue for theatrical shows, films, plays, gallery exhibitions, drama, music, recitals, storytelling, arts festivals and other events.



COED HILLS

Wales' leading venue for art in the environment. Walk the 80 acre woodland sculpture trail, explore eco-lifestyles and learn about renewable energy. Please ring ahead for opening times.



© I need a Haircut • Flickr ►

CANNON HILL ARTS SPACE

Canonhill Artspace – a meeting place housing artists' studios (purpose-built, light and clean studio spaces of various sizes), Canon Hill Pottery (access to many kilns of various sizes, with pottery, glass and sculpture equipment also available to artists who do not have their own equipment), art classes in ceramics, sculpture, life drawing and painting, the Art4U Gallery showing local artists' work and Barry Meditation Centre make up this local resource and art space.



HAPPY DAYS, COWBRIDGE & STONE HOUSE, OGMORE

The Stone House, a 14th Century barn in Ogmore by Sea on the Glamorgan Heritage Coast is full of beautiful things for you and your home.

They offer hundreds of vintage treasures and local crafts. It really is a lovely place to visit, with lime-washed walls and cobbled floors, you are sure to fall in love with the surroundings as well as its contents.

As authorised stockists of *Annie Sloan Chalk Paint* they not only keep a full range of paints and waxes in stock, but hold regular classes to instruct on their use.



THE OLD WOOL BARN – COWBRIDGE

The Wool Barn in Cowbridge is home to a number of open artist and makers studios. Just set back from the main high street in a small courtyard, the studios are an idyllic place to visit, chat to the artists and if desired, purchase or commission some local works. The studios host a number of skilled and renowned artists and makers including *Sue McDonagh* who in 1993, opened a small gallery attached to her studio at the Old Wool Barn. Her joyously coloured work largely inspired by the Glamorgan Heritage Coast, has been widely exhibited, made into limited edition prints and greeting cards and are sold far afield. These days she paints mainly to commission, working mostly in pastel, acrylic or oil paint. The studio also hosts the studios of photographers, milliners, jewellery makers, cake crafters and, following in the tradition of the Vale, ceramist *Maggie Andrews* who specializes in the use of Porcelain, using it to create fine, intricate pieces that reflect her love of landscape and nature.



OLD HALL GALLERY, COWBRIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The college in Cowbridge has an exhibition space in its foyer – Old Hall Gallery – which is regularly filled with exhibitions from individual artists, students and artists groups such as the Vale of Glamorgan Artists and Cowbridge Art Society which each boast a healthy and talented membership of multi-disciplined artists. The college also runs a varied and popular range of arts and crafts workshops and courses, often featuring local artists such as *Peter Cronin*. Peter Cronin is a self-taught traditional watercolourist and oil painter who turned professional painter following a twenty year career in structural engineering. Peter is based in Llantwit Major and his work is inspired by the natural world.

▼ Peter Cronin



For a more comprehensive list
of **ARTISTS & CRAFTMAKERS**
working in the Vale today,
please see arts connect.

Arts Connect can provide an invaluable
stepping stone and a helping hand
for aspiring artists, musicians, singers,
writers, performers and more.



ARTS EVENTS

The backdrop of the Vale of Glamorgan with its rolling countryside and dramatic coastline is a vibrant setting for some great arts events. Here's a taster of just a few:

EWENNY *Music Festival*

This festival sets an international programme of music against the beautiful Norman architecture of Ewenny Priory Church.

As well as an annual festival programme, the team host regular fundraising concerts at the Priory Church almost every month.

Keep an eye on their website for forthcoming concert details.

www.ewennyfestival.co.uk



▲ Opus 8 in rehearsal at Ewenny Priory Church, June 2014



VALE OF GLAMORGAN *Music Festival*

Held now in May each year, this internationally recognised music festival is all about championing and supporting the work of today's composers.

It was founded in 1969 by Welsh composer *John Metcalf* who is Artistic Director to this day. It began as a generic classical music festival but re-defined itself in 1992 to become a *'festival of living composers.'* Since then it has gained a reputation as one of the most adventurous music festivals in Britain.

www.valeofglamorganfestival.org.uk

VALE OF GLAMORGAN
festival
GWYL BRO MORGANNWG



▲ John Metcalf (b.1946, UK),
Composer & Artistic Director of
the Vale of Glamorgan Festival



▲ Beyond the Border International Storytelling Festival

BEYOND THE BORDER *International Storytelling Festival*

This is a magnificently colourful three-day festival of stories and music from Wales and the world. Storytellers, musician and visitors from across Europe and further afield gather in the beautiful grounds of medieval St Donats castle on the Vale Heritage Coast in early July once every two years, to listen to tales new and old, renew old friendships and make new ones.

With stories, poetry, music, singing, theatre, circus, puppets, films, delicious food and colourful stalls, there's a lot for the whole family to enjoy.

www.beyondtheborder.com



COMMUNITY CINEMAS

In addition to the static cinema on Penarth pier, Barry's Memorial Hall and Theatre, St Donat's Art Centre Atlantic College, the rural vale hosts a number of community cinemas run by volunteers and has a mobile cinema unit which travels around to be used by communities.

These include:

LLANCARFAN *Cinema*

Hosts monthly screenings of the best modern and classic movies in Llancarfan Village Hall. The Llancarfan cinema team won the Filmbank Audience Award at the UK's 2013 best new film society Awards.

<http://llancarfancinema.co.uk>

COWBRIDGE *Big Screen*

Held at the town hall last Thursday of the month.

<http://bigscreenvale.blogspot.co.uk>

DINAS POWYS *Cinema*

Murchfield Community Hall holds monthly Saturday night screenings in the hall.

www.moretothevale.com/whats-on

PETERSON *Super Ely Community Cinema*

Shows on the last Friday of every month, tickets from £4.

www.peterstonsuperely.org/#!community-cinema/c224z

MAKERS OF OUR PAST

GRACE WILLIAMS – *Composer*

Grace Williams was a renowned composer born to a musical family in Barry in 1906. Both her parents were teachers, her father taught music and also conducted the Romily Boys Choir. Grace learned piano and violin and developed her musical skills early on, playing piano trios with her father and brother, and accompanying her father's choir.

In 1923, she won the Morfudd Owen Scholarship and went on to study music at University College, Cardiff. Three years later she went on to study composition with Vaughan Williams at the Royal College of Music. Another scholarship followed. This one took her to Vienna to study with Egon Wellesz, and during her time there was inspired by her regular visits to the opera. She returned to Britain in 1931 and took up a teaching post in London. It was at this time that her friendship with Benjamin Britten began.

During the Second World War, her students were evacuated to Grantham in Lincolnshire. Grace went too. It was where she composed some of her earliest works including the Sinfonia Concertante for piano and orchestra and her First Symphony.

Following the war, Grace worked for the BBC Schools Department, but due to increasingly persistent bouts of depression and other stress-related health problems which had begun during the war, she decided to return home to Wales and made her home once more in Barry, where she lived for the rest of her life.

She wrote mainly for orchestra and voices, although she is also remembered for her songs. Welsh folk tunes often featured in her work for voices and played a central role in the Fantasia on Welsh Nursery Tunes written for orchestra.



▲ Grace Williams

Other works reflect her Welsh roots through the rhythms and cadences of old Welsh poetry. One of her most famous works is the Penillion for orchestra, commissioned for the National Youth Orchestra of Wales in 1955.

She became the first British woman to score a feature film, 'Blue Scar'. In 1960–61 she wrote her only opera, The Parlour, which was performed in 1966. In that same year she declined the offer of the OBE for her services to music.

Her final work, Two Choruses for chorus, Harp and Two Horns is set in the seaport of Barry. She died in 1977.



GWYN THOMAS – *Author*

Gwyn Thomas was a Welsh writer, radio broadcaster, dramatist and raconteur.

He was widely known as a Punch-columnist, and was regarded as 'the true voice of the English-speaking valleys.'

Gwyn Thomas was born in Cymmer in the Rhondda Valley in July 1913. He was the youngest of 12 children in a coal mining family. His mother died when he was just six years old and as a result he was raised by his elder sister through times of great hardship for the family.

He won a scholarship to Oxford University where he studied Spanish. It was touch and go whether he would complete his studies as he suffered a number of health problems (which would later be diagnosed as an issue with his thyroid), and was at times very depressed and impoverished. However, a miner's scholarship enabled him to travel to the University of Madrid during his second year, where he began to enjoy the work, and developed a keen interest in writing.

Following graduation, Thomas struggled to establish himself as a writer during the 1930s depression. He took on part time lecturing jobs whilst trying to get his first novel, *Sorrow For Thy Sons* published.

He married his childhood friend Eluned Thoms in 1938 and took on a number of teaching posts home in Wales, settling for a time in Cardigan and then in Barry, where he taught at Barry County Boys School for 20 years.

Following the war, Eluned sent some of his short stories to three publishers who each accepted them for publication. Later, in 1951 he was approached by BBC Radio Wales to write a script for Radio. For this, he drew on his childhood memories of the mining communities of the 1920's and wrote *Gazuka!*

In 1962 he retired from teaching and moved with Eluned to Peterston-super-Ely, where he turned his full attention to writing and then broadcasting. He died on 13 April, 1981.

He is commemorated by a bronze bust in the foyer of the New Theatre, Cardiff, and a blue plaque on the Old College Inn, Barry where he taught.



POTTERY – *Handmade from Glamorgan's earth*

Just beyond the Vale of Glamorgan in nearby Ewenny earthenware has been produced since Mediaeval times! Correctly 'Ewenny pottery' is a generic term for wares once produced from 14 or 15 potteries in the Bridgend area only two of which have survived and specifically those made by the Jenkins family at EWENNY POTTERY. Opposite is CLAYPITS POTTERY established in 1788 by John Williams and subsequently run by relatives of the Jenkins family. It is still in family ownership but is now leased to Len Edger who produces Stoneware figures and jewellery.

The kilns of Ewenny were not the large bottle shaped kilns of Staffordshire and Swansea that made pottery on an industrial scale but were rudimentary often being built by the potters themselves or by local craftsmen who built the infrastructure, the potter's wheel and associated machinery. One such kiln, in the South Wales area, illustrated below, is described as

this kiln had been in use without any very great amount of repair for close upon a hundred years

(interview with Horace Elliott
"Pottery Gazette and Glass
Trade Review" February 2 1931).

Today's Ewenny Pottery is produced by direct descendants of the founders – Alun Jenkins, daughter Caitlin (now Davies) who are ably assisted by Alun's wife, Jayne. All the ingredients, clay, slip and glazes are bought in and now electric kilns remove much of the guess work from the process making for a more uniform product with minimal waste.

Following the tradition of their ancestors the wares are either thrown by hand on the potter's wheel, moulded or slipcast.

Invoices from the early 1900s identify sales mostly to local earthenware dealers and markets but also further afield – Parsons of Boston, USA; London, Scotland and Ireland, Ystradgynlais, Swansea, Llandrindod Wells and Llandudno.



▲ Wayside Kiln

The Vale's team of Ambassadors are there to help facilitate your visit, and share their knowledge and passion for the Vale with our visitors. If you would like to know more about this dedicated team of volunteers and how they might be able to help enrich your visit, have a look at:

www.moretothevale.com or

www.lovethevale.com or

www.visitthevale.com

and check out the Ambassadors section of the site.

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RURAL COMMUNITIES

VALE of GLAMORGAN

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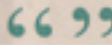


Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu
Gwledig: Ewrop yn Buddsoddi
mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig
The European Agricultural Fund for
Rural Development: Europe Investing in
Rural Areas



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Produced by Angharad Wynne

 Angharad Wynne
www.angharadwynne.com

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countryscape 