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alongside our 'official' museum display goods. As ever, these events are important for us, both to raise much needed funds and to advertise the museum. Please help!

Fundraising May - £159

May 100 Club

No.31	Jean Liddington	£20
No.84	Corinne Taylor	£10
No.19	Huw Bearcroft	£5

Annual Lunch

The Museum Society's Annual Lunch took place in mid-May at Ty Ebbw Fach, Six Bells. As always, it was very successful with an enjoyable meal, a talk by Meg Gurney on The Guardian statue, and a quiz set by Sharon and Dale. A big thank you to Peggy and her helpers for all their hard work in organising the event.

Museum Faces



Peggy Bearcroft – our longstanding Chairman and a familiar figure at the museum.

Welcome We extend a warm welcome to Lucy Harding and Greg York who recently signed up as Vice Presidents. We hope they will become familiar faces at the museum.

Whitsun Walks The Whitsun Walks coffee morning was an enjoyable event which brought back many memories and was an opportunity for people to see some of the photos from our archives. A big thank you to Margaret Cook for her skilful presentation of the talk which brought newspaper reports and personal memories very much to life..

Museum Archives

The first Newsletter we have in our files is dated February 1995 and it is interesting to see just how things have changed in the intervening years. The February edition comprised just one page (plus a separate book

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review). Here it is:

"Welcome to our Spring programme of meetings, and a particular welcome back to Mr Selwyn and Mr Robinson who had some health problems back in the winter. Tonight we have Mr Gerallt Nash from the Welsh Folk Museum at St Fagans, and next month (6th March) we have Mr Bill Gascoigne who will give us an illustrated talk on the spectacular caves to be found in the locality.

Looking ahead to field trips, Dr Gray has arranged a car-based trip in the Margam area on Saturday 20th April, starting at Kenfig Visitors Centre at 10.00a.m. On to May and Judy Phipps has arranged for us to visit Penhow Castle on Saturday 18th May (cost £3.15); there will be a bus if enough people are interested, and a pub lunch. Judy cannot be at tonight's meeting but if you are interested in the Penhow trip please contact her or give your name to Mrs Enid Dean (Mrs Dean will also collect any foil and stamps you may have brought along this evening).

If you thought there wouldn't be another book launch for a long while you are in for a pleasant surprise - our Curator, Don Bearcroft, has collaborated with Simon Eckley to produce a new book on the "Voices of Abertillery, Aberbeeg and Llanhilleth". Don has prepared the attached review which explains more about how he came to write the book, which will be launched in April and which will doubtless be popular".

Move on to October 1995 and the Newsletter notes that the Society has plans to visit Tredegar Park House, Penhow and Abergavenny in the months ahead as well as news of the monthly lecture programme we were able to sustain in those days. The President at that time, Mr Arthur Lewis (who sadly died last summer) was standing down as he was moving to live near his son, Mr Bernard Jones was re-elected Treasurer (a post he still holds) and 500 copies of the new book had been sold.

As at the end of 1995 the museum was still housed in the room below the library but things were about to change as you will find out in next month's Newsletter when we will take a look at Museum business in 1996.

Reminder - Subscriptions for members (£6) and Vice Presidents (£25) were due at the beginning of the year so if you haven't already paid, can you please renew your memberships – we value your interest (and your money).

Book Signing Saturday 10th June

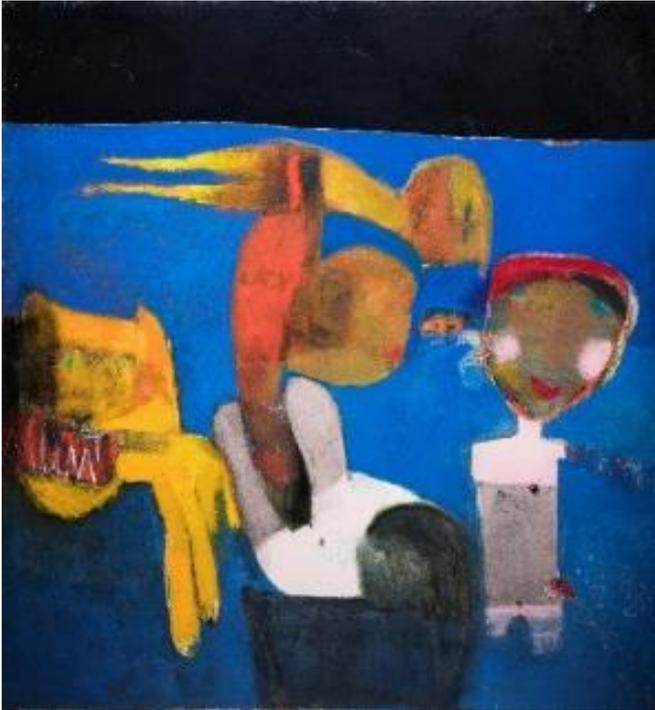
We hope you will come along to the special event at the museum on **Saturday 10th June at 11.30 am** – the launch of a new book by Peter Wakelin, art critic with The Guardian newspaper, about local artist Roger Cecil who never courted fame or fortune but nevertheless was an artist of international renown. Peter Wakelin refers to him as "Abertillery's Secret Artist".

Roger Cecil made headlines in February 2015 when his body was found in a field near Cwmbran. Police had issued an appeal two days earlier when a 72-year-old man suffering from Alzheimer's went missing from a hospital at Newport, South Wales. Searches involved a helicopter and 50 police officers with dogs. The subsequent inquest found he had died of hypothermia while trying to walk the 16 miles to his home at Abertillery through a winter night.

None of the initial publicity mentioned that Roger Cecil was an artist but it soon became apparent that this was one of the greatest painters Wales had produced. Now his legacy is celebrated with an exhibition and a new biography, *Roger Cecil: A Secret Artist*. Author, Peter Wakelin, will give an illustrated talk at the book launch and some of Roger Cecil's original paintings will be on show.

(Entrance £3 in aid of the museum.)

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Mabon the Cat and Angharad and Me, 1990-5

J

eanette Fulton is a name you may have noticed in this newsletter in past editions, listed as a Vice President, and you may have wondered who she was. Well in fact she was an American, who never visited this museum but who very kindly left \$5000 to the museum in her Will. Why would someone from across the Atlantic be so generous you may ask...?

Museum member Vera Smith and my mother the late Betty Wayne, while still in school, were given the opportunity to have pen friends from across *'the pond'*. They both started corresponding with twins from Mississippi, USA called Jeanette and Annette.

In the early 1950's Jeanette and Annette along with a girl friend, came to visit my mother and Vera in Abertillery. The photo below shows, from left, Jeanette, my mother Betty, Jeanette's sister Annette and my mother's young nephew, taken outside 44 Evelyn Street.



Annette went on to Marry Charles (Chuck) Mckenney and they moved to Delaware and had two daughters, Rhonda, and Keva while Jeanette married CB Fulton (he was always known as 'CB') and they remained

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childless.

Here you can see Jeanette (second from left), my mother (centre) and next to her Vera Smith. Photo taken during the same visit in the early 1950's.



When I was a child, every year at Christmas, a large box would arrive from Jeanette with gifts for all the family. In the late 1960's Jeanette came to visit again. This photo was taken in the back garden of our home in Gelli Crug Road and shows Jeanette, my mother, my sister and me holding our dog Candy!

When hurricane Katrina hit Mississippi on 29th August 2005, Jeanette and CB had a very lucky escape. They had recently moved to an apartment where, apart from some damage to their motor vehicle due to falling branches and a loss of power for several days, they escaped unscathed. Their *previous* home, however, was completely destroyed by the hurricane!

Vera and my mother (and my father after my mother's death) continued to correspond with both sisters and, with the advent of the museum newsletter, Vera decided to include a copy of the newsletter with her letters. Jeanette must have found the museum newsletters of interest because, when Jeanette passed away, around I believe 2012, she left \$5000 US dollars to the museum she had never visited!

The money was well spent providing an extra display case (presently used for warfare items) which was badly needed and which the museum had previously been unable to afford.

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Sally Murphy

Editor's Note

The articles, such as the one above, written by local residents, are the features which our readers say they most enjoy in our monthly Newsletter. Please let us have your memories. If you don't want to put pen to paper yourself, let me know and we can arrange for someone to write up an article for you. Here is a wealth of material out there, let's hear from you.

Vice Presidents (Annual Subscription £25)

Rev. R Watson

Prof. Gerwyn Griffiths(dec'd)

Mr Arthur Lewis OBE (dec'd)

Dr Graham Eyre-Morgan

Mr Greg York

Mrs Esme Heal

Mrs Margaret Herbert

Mrs Carole Brooks

Mrs Eryl Dykes

Ms Lucy Harding