

Classical Celtic: Wales and Scotland in a Mediterranean Light

NMW Cardiff, Reardon Smith Theatre, 19 September 2014

10am -5pm

This event marks the start of a new AHRC-funded project jointly run by the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies and the University of Glasgow. It is timed to overlap with a major international exhibition of paintings at NMW Cardiff by the artist Richard Wilson (1714-1782), and brings together a range of experts in different fields to explore the influence of Greece and Rome on travellers to Romantic-era Wales and Scotland.

10.15: Oliver Fairclough (Keeper of Art, NMW)

Welcome and brief introduction to the Richard Wilson exhibition.

10.30: Dr Mary-Ann Constantine (Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, University of Wales).

Introducing the *Curious Travellers* Project: Thomas Pennant and the Romans in Britain

A brief introduction to a new AHRC-funded project on the Welsh and Scottish tour 1760-1815, and to the pioneering work of Thomas Pennant. Roman artefacts loom large in Pennant's *Tours* of both Wales and Scotland, and traces of Roman industry, art and civilisation are duly noted and discussed. But the conquering Romans' relationship with the native Britons is not without its problems. This paper explores some awkward textual moments in the *Tours* which suggest a conflict of political loyalties.

11.00 Jacqueline Ansell (Christies Education – University of Glasgow)

Noble or Ignoble Savages? Welsh Clothing and Character seen through the eyes of the English Tourist

11.30 Coffee

12.00 Keynote Lecture: Professor Robin Simon FSA (University College London; Editor of the *British Art Journal*)

“To rival Claude”: Richard Wilson and Classical Imitation.

After spending seven years in Italy, which transformed his life and his art, Richard Wilson returned to Britain in 1757. His redirection of the art of landscape now developed through his adaptation to painting of the classical literary conceit of 'imitation'.

1pm: Lunch (please make your own arrangements) and a chance to look round the Richard Wilson exhibition

2.15: Professor Dafydd Moore (University of Plymouth)

Ossian and the Greek Example: James Macpherson, Hugh Blair and the Dramatic Sublime

The importance of the Homeric example to James Macpherson as he created his epic *Ossian* from the Gaelic balladry of the Highlands and Islands is well known. Yet in his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783), Macpherson's mentor, sponsor and, according to some, collaborator, makes as many references to Aeschylus as he does Homer in his account of *Ossian* and in particular the Ossianic sublime. This paper will explore this previously unobserved connection and assess the extent to which the aesthetics of the ancient Greek stage influenced Macpherson's mediation of Celtic literature.

2.45 Dr Allison Ksiazkiewicz (University of Cambridge)

Geological landscape as antiquarian ruin: Banks, Pennant and the isle of Staffa

Published in Thomas Pennant's "A tour in Scotland the voyage in the Hebrides, 1772" (1774), Sir Joseph Banks (1743–1820) described the island of Staffa and Fingal's Cave using architectural analogy as a technique for rationalizing the site. This paper will examine the role of the picturesque in antiquarian studies of Gothic and Classical architectures and will suggest that the first descriptions of Staffa might be better understood within this programme of antiquarian research..

3.15: Tea

3.30: Dr Maureen McCue (University of Bangor)

Hester Lynch Thrale Piozzi and Brynbella

4.00: Professor Harriet Guest (University of York)

Richard Wilson and Dover

This paper looks at Wilson's early paintings of Dover in the context of his later work as well as competing representations of the town. It will explore the relation between the port as a transitional space and a site of national identity.

4.30: Emeritus Professor Prys Morgan, University of Swansea

Discussion and Concluding remarks