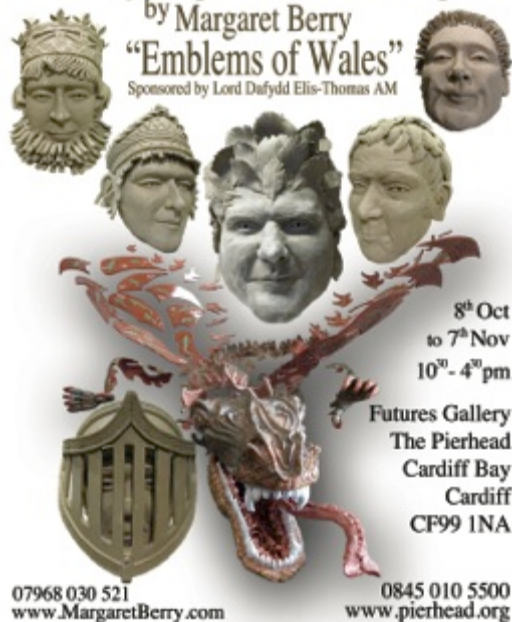


## SEVEN LARGE SUSPENDED SCULPTURES “EMBLEMS OF WALES”

Sponsored by Lord Dafydd Elis Thomas AM

8<sup>th</sup> October to 7<sup>th</sup> November, everyday 10.30-4.30pm

Seven large suspended ceramic sculptures



“Draig” the ten-foot flying dragon has been sleeping in a box since Margaret Berry’s popular 2011 show in Mid-Wales at Cywain, Y Bala and next sees the light on October 8<sup>th</sup>. Draig should be in good company with a King, a Prince and other characters drawn from 1500 years of Welsh history. Margaret specialises in suspended sculptures and her chosen medium is ceramic. The sculptures are all part lifelike, part abstract.

“Emblems of Wales” was purposefully created to fit the Welsh Assembly’s Pierhead building. Margaret has created a set of six large suspended sculptures to complement the dragon on a theme of “representing Wales and its People”.

Each of the historical, legendary famous characters is emblematic of Wales and each sculpture is emblematic of the properties necessary to represent its people. The display lasts for four weeks in the Futures Gallery upstairs at the Pierhead with full disabled access. It opens on 8<sup>th</sup> October and continues until 7<sup>th</sup> November. Open daily, 10.30-4.30pm.

### THE SCULPTURES – REPRESENTING WALES AND ITS PEOPLE

Each sculpture is slightly larger than life-sized at about 2m standing height or more.

#### Taliesin (500-542) “Poetic Inspiration”



The mythological and historical bard Taliesin composes poetry in the company of his former changeling self: a fish, a hare, a bird and a grain of corn.

Intentions, plans and method cannot be communicated effectively without linguistic skill. Poetic inspiration both captivates and motivates and is another piece of the jigsaw of representing Wales and its People.

This magical character of Welsh legend and history blows alphabetical letters into the air, the letters assuming greater clarity as they leave his creative hands. The colours and textures are delicate yet powerful and based on nature as his legendary self was born from a potion of gathered plants.



**Hywel Dda (880-950) “Control”**

Crowned Hywel Dda balances on a fulcrum, the spine of an open book representing his book of law and a sample of its Latin text aids his balance.

Unifying King Hywel Dda created consistency and predictability by collating the many and various laws of the Welsh counties and sought to produce a single set of clear, consistent legal boundaries. These rules generated confidence through trust.

Representation of Wales and its People requires a clear and consistent set of ethical rules. Hywel Dda's palette and costume are derived from the book of his laws recently bought by the National Library of Wales.

**Llywelyn ap Gruffydd (1223-1282) “Independence”**

An eight-foot tall skydiver plunges through the air yet delicately holds a key.

Royal through a right of birth, Llywelyn ap Gruffydd represents independence, strength and vigour. He is so free and independent he doesn't even need wings to fly and he holds the universal key. Each and every person that is democratically represented should be empowered through liberty.

His palette is selected from his heraldic colours and frescos painted during this period; his long fingers are in the style of thirteenth century illustrations.

**Owain Glyndwr (1354-1416) “Land Ownership”**

A pensive armour-clad Owain Glyndwr considers stones gathered from the varied and beautiful landscapes of the Welsh counties.

Owain Glyndwr's warring began in a dispute over land ownership. This man of books found no justice in paper and resorted to the sword. The sculpture considers the emotive effects of land ownership. It is an implicit foundation of representing Wales and its People.

Owain Glyndwr's seal marks the ground he kneels upon, golden and in his heraldic colours.

**Robert Owen (1771-1858) “Social Principles”**

Robert Owen, a mill owner and founder of the co-operative movement is sat cross-legged, his shoes removed.

It is impossible to represent a People without a sound set of moral principles. The represented people require ethical rules that facilitate the progression of the individual to achieve self-actualisation in a common goal.

Robert Owen noticed and addressed the imbalance of power. He is depicted in period costume, cross-legged, shoes off, engaged in debate, listening and discussing. His bust and muted palette are derived from photographic and painted portraits.

**Bryn Terfel (1965-) “Voice”**

This larger than life Bryn Terfel soars in flight, his wings outstretched.

The most effective communication is word of mouth and communication is required to understand people's needs and problems. Communication is also needed to propose, debate and improve suggested solutions. It is a balance of talking and listening.

Bryn Terfel is depicted as the majestic yet agile kite so common in the Welsh sky the bird's whistle echoing in the clear mountain air. This world-renowned singer is an attentive listener yet his voice carries to many.

**Draig**

The symbol of Wales, its origin lost in the dragon's breath of time.

The ten-foot part running, part flying dragon is red on the inside representing its spirit, assuming character is more important than outward appearance. Additionally:



- There are miniature red dragons along the length of its spine.
- Tongue symbols run the length of the spine below the miniature dragons. These are the symbol of the Welsh Language Society.
- The wings are in the colours of the Welsh National flag: red, green and white, again adopting the tongue pattern.
- Draig" is inscribed in the back of the dragon's head.

Dragon was developed through eighteen months of drawings, prototypes and other studies including two months of sculpting and a week to suspend it.



## THE ARTIST



Margaret created her first suspended sculpture in 2005 winning Best of Show with “Aspects of Love”. Her next suspended piece was sold to hoteliers in Oberderdingen, Germany forming a centrepiece to the wooden spiral staircase in their grand entrance hall. She also makes large sectioned sculptures; Unicorn is the size of a small pony.

Margaret was born a five-minute walk from London’s Fulham Pottery into a loving family and was encouraged to enjoy the arts. She learnt to draw with Salvador Dali prints on the wall, a piano in the lounge, “Love” on the record player and experiences of classic painting and sculpture in some of London’s most prestigious galleries and museums.

At 16, she made two jointed suspended puppets - a second taste of her future. In the first year of A’ level, she sculpted a clay head as an Italian bust frustratingly disposed of in the school skip. At that time Margaret lacked confidence in her work and after the A’ level course she stopped drawing.

She experimented with career paths from pea picker to administrator before completing a Sheffield computing degree when she won the Freshgate Trust Award. “I loved the study but loathed working in the IT arena. In retrospect I had some truly wonderful jobs but they simply weren’t right for me” she says.

At night, after her day in the city, she would often look through the Road Atlas of Great Britain and think of what might be. She had assumed it was the job that was at fault but three fantastic IT jobs later, drove to Machynlleth, Mid-Wales for the weekend. The next day she rented an isolated stone cottage and resigned on the Monday. Less than four months later she had found a six-week drawing course and discovered that she could draw but her head ruled that she stay with the sciences: she considered intelligent prosthetic limb design but reflected that such a career would lead back to a city life; in 2003 she was miserable as she qualified with PGCEII(Sciences).

*“I drove to Wales on a Friday, the next day rented an isolated stone cottage and resigned on the Monday!”*

*“I listen to my heart when I make decisions now and I’m a lot happier. I like to work with clay everyday and miss it, even pine for it when I don’t.”*

In 2005, she completed the exceptional Foundation Art course at Coleg Menai in Bangor with full distinctions and tremendous certainty that clay was the way forward. She won an award with a suspended sculpture in 2005 and bought her electric kiln a year later. She then finished renovating her period cottage and started trading as a sculptor in April 2009.

Ever since she left school, people have asked Margaret what she does for a living often adding they had thought her to be an artist.

Margaret’s work is mostly sourced from Welsh poetry, myths and legends adopting patterns and textures found in nature.

