

# Throwback Thursday: A Wood Green Artist

## Thursday 11 June 2020

Welcome to Throwback Thursday: A Wood Green Artist - sharing our heritage from Bruce Castle Museum & Archive.

Huw Edwards, the newsreader and journalist, [published a book](#) in 2015 – ‘[City Mission: The story of London’s Welsh Chapels](#)’. He starts his story:

‘In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a tough young farmhand called Daniel Edwards left Dyffren Aeron in Cardiganshire bound for London. Daniel was my great-grandfather. He and thousands like him were driven from home by extreme hardship. A tenant farmer’s life in rural Cardiganshire was brutally unforgiving.’

What started with his own family history and the arrival of his great-grandfather in London, Huw’s research became a journey of unravelling the hidden and overlooked history of the migrant Welsh in London. As Huw says, ‘The story of the Welsh in London spans a thousand years. In many ways, it is still largely untold.’ This is, of course, true for many of our diverse and multicultural communities who, over the last millennium, have made London home and whose stories must be told too.

Huw’s journey took him around many areas of London, including the East End and here in North London, where a number of Welsh dairy farmers had brought their skills and trade. Communities settled, with a network of Welsh chapels emerging around the Capital, becoming the focal for many activities of Welsh family life.

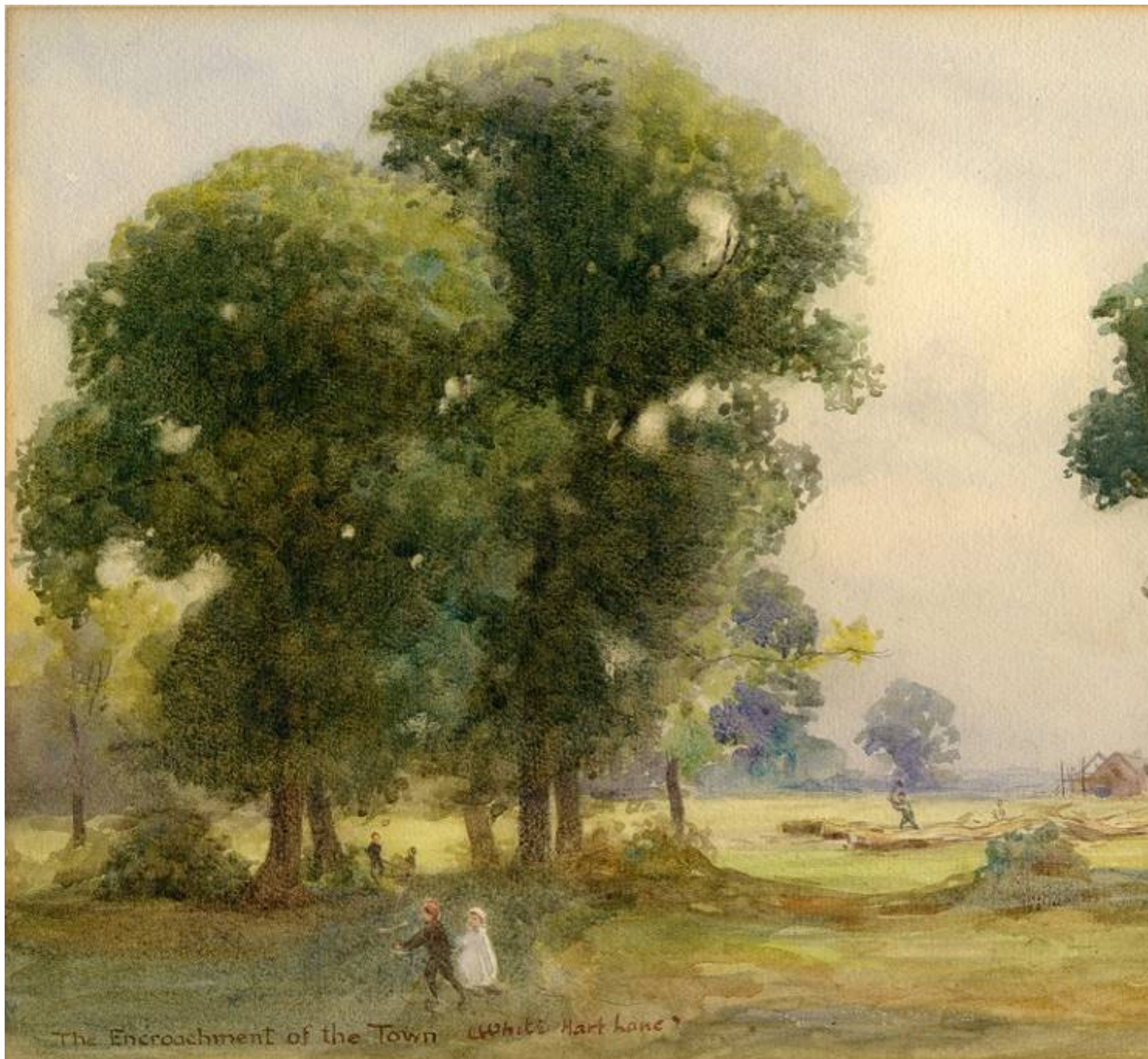
Huw also reminds us that it took a Welshman – [Sir Hugh Myddleton](#) (1560-1631), the entrepreneur and engineer – to provide Londoners with a permanent supply of clean water during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, following the devastating [plague epidemic in London in 1603](#) due to poor sanitation. We know Myddleton’s New River of course, as it still flows through Haringey and has done so since 1613 (we saw two pictures of the New River in Wednesday’s post).



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We learn too that a Welsh Non-conformist chapel was established in Wood Green in 1904, initially meeting in a hall in Lordship Lane, near to the Wood Green tube station. As the congregation grew, so a [‘corrugated iron’ chapel](#) on Bounds Green Road was built, [on the corner of Northcott Avenue](#). It was affectionately known as ‘Capel Tin’ (the ‘Tin Chapel’). It was a Welsh base for almost 10 years, before it moved to a former Baptist chapel [in Palace Road, Bounds Green](#) in February 1915. This was their home until 2004 (although the site has since been redeveloped, Google maps still has it marked as Capel Cymraeg). A view of the former Baptist chapel can be seen in the photograph above.

This chapel had some of the best facilities of any other London Welsh chapel. The community built a hall, calling it Tudor Hall because of its beamed ceiling, completed in 1923. Although the site suffered during the Blitz in the Second World War, the community thrived during the post-war years. As one remembers: *‘The 1950s were a good time for the London chapels, with new faces appearing regularly ... There were lots of dairy farmers. The Morgan family were farmers. Evan and Rosemary Morgan were pillars of the cause at Wood Green.’*



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At around the same time that Huw Edwards had got in touch with us at Bruce Castle to find out more about the Wood Green Welsh chapel, we were also undertaking more research on our collection of watercolours. We were preparing to add some of our collection to what has now become the fascinating website [Watercolour World](#). We did this with the help of John Hinshelwood, who was volunteering at the Museum at the time. The name of the artist 'W. Maliphant' leapt out as one that could be researched fairly easily. Maliphant's watercolour painting entitled '*The Encroachment of the Town, White Hart Lane*' (1906), can be seen above. (Only two watercolours by Maliphant from our collection are on the Watercolour World website as these date before 1900, one of the criteria for inclusion. You can see them [both here](#)).

'W. Maliphant' was the artist William Maliphant (1862-1932), the son of John (?) and Elizabeth Maliphant. He was born in Brynmawr, Breconshire in South Wales.

Just like Huw Edward's other relatives who emigrated from Wales to the USA (with a number of them tragically experiencing terrible hardship and poverty when they got there), so William's family also emigrated to the States. William was about 2 years old when they arrived at their new home in Johnston, Pennsylvania. Growing up there, it is said the young William met a travelling portrait painter who inspired him to be an artist too.

Sadly, William's father died in Pennsylvania. This saw Elizabeth and William return to Britain. Here, he became an apprentice to a draughtsman, specifically working on wood in order that he might draw for engravers. The Census of 1881 records this Welsh family living at 1 Station Road, Wood Green. Elizabeth Maliphant is described as a 39-year-old widow and a keeper of a coffee house in Station Road. William by that time is 19.

William's watercolour (below) of Travellers and their '[vardo](#)' (a traditional Romani horse-drawn wagon or gypsy caravan) seen in a rural White Hart Lane, was undertaken in 1880 – when he was just 18 years old.



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The book '[Welsh Painters, Engravers and Sculptors](#)' tells us more about William's life. It is said he took to painting in colour, and studied at the Westminster School of Art, under Frank Brown and M. Londau. There is a suggestion elsewhere that

he also studied at the Hornsey College of Art, but this has not been verified as yet. The Royal British Society of Artists list a few works by William, completed in 1887-1888, with his address at that time given as 3 Henrietta Villas, Winkfield Road, Wood Green. Below is one of three photographs from our collections at Bruce Castle that show William – seen here smoking a pipe in a garden (unknown location), probably in c.1900.



From the collections and © Bruce Castle Museum (Haringey Archive and Museum Service)

The following year in 1889, William had exhibited his first painting at the Royal Academy with *'The Kissing Mom'*. In the 1891 Census, William is 28 years old, not married and described as an 'Artist Publishing and Printing'. He is still living in Wood Green, at 43 [Winkfield Road](#) when we look at the subsequent censuses of 1901 and 1911 (the house is no longer there). He is listed as an artist (illustrator and painter) and is also living at this address with his unmarried aunt, Jane Greenway.



William standing in 'Powis Lane' in c.1890. It is likely that this is Powys Lane (different spelling) in Southgate.

From the collections and © Bruce Castle Museum (Haringey Archive and Museum Service)

The biographical details we have for William have been established through the publications already mentioned and also by checking the Census, Directories and the Electoral Roll. There is also a delightful family history website about Maliphants from around the world, including William and also two other artists with that name; it can be [viewed here](#).

We can possibly assume that when William and his mother moved to Wood Green, they might have been drawn to the area because they knew or were aware of Welsh families already living here. We can only surmise, though, that the Maliphants might have attended the Wood Green Welsh chapel. As an adult, William had always lived at two Wood Green addresses - Station Road and Winkfield Road, not far at all from the first meeting place and Welsh chapel in Lordship Lane.

As yet, no additional biographical details have been uncovered for him or his mother. We know, though, a little more about his artwork and practice. After the first inclusion of his work at the RA in 1889, he went on to exhibit there on further occasions, showing work in oil and watercolour, as well as exhibiting at The Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolour. Descriptions of his art indicate that he often painted pastoral scenes and landscapes, suggesting he frequently visited Wales. Scenes of Breconshire, where he was born, are listed amongst those

paintings of the Usk Valley in Monmouthshire (you can see one of his Welsh landscapes [here](#)). He is also known to have painted portraits as well as a significant number of illustrations published in books and magazines survive, including '*Sunday at Home*', '*Boy's Own Paper*', '*Children's Magazine*'.



WHITE HART LANE. 1908.

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The drawing in ink (above) shows another view by William of Travellers in a still rural White Hart Lane in 1908. The large chimney in the distance is the only hint in this scene of the urban landscape of Wood Green beyond, at the turn of the 20th century. William's drawing style is reminiscent of an engraving, perhaps learnt from his apprenticeship to a draughtsman and on wood for engravings, and used for his work illustrating books.

The last detail we have for William is when he died on 27 April 1932 at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London. He is buried in Llanbedr, Breconshire.

**MALIPHANT** William of 43 Winkfield-road Wood Green **Middlesex** died 27 April 1932 at St. Bartholomews Hospital London Probate **London** 24 May to Francis Jones draper. Effects £785 11s. 9d.

We imagine William's life as an artist would have been different to the experiences of the many other Welsh families living and working in London. The book by Emrys Jones [\*The Welsh in London 1500-2000\*](#) (published 2001) is the only other book recently that highlights such lives and tells us the stories of the London Welsh communities. It would be good to see this and learn more about the Welsh community in Wood Green and Haringey.

And if you know any stories, have photographs about the Welsh community in Wood Green and elsewhere in the borough, or have discovered further information about William Maliphant, please do get in touch. It would be great to hear more and add to our collections at Bruce Castle.

With my apologies that this could only be sent out this morning, and not yesterday as planned.

Take care, stay well  
Best wishes from us all at Bruce Castle

**Deborah Hedgecock**  
Curator

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