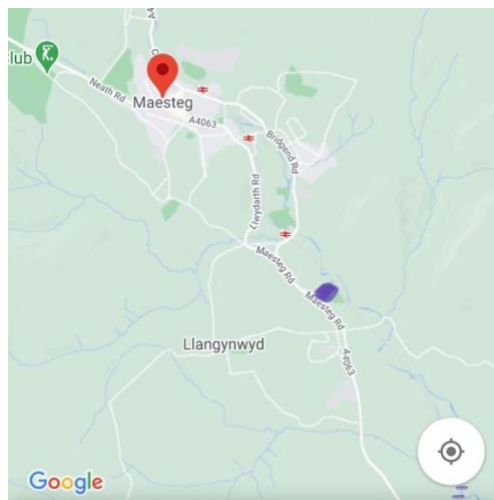


Research Report

While trying to figure out a place that I could explore for my visual enquires that was within the Covid-19 restrictions my mother mentioned a pair of stones at the park near by my house and explained the little knowledge she knew about them, that instantly got me intrigued within the site so I began researching the history. The place is in between Maesteg and Llangynywd which is shown on the map below on the purple dot.



The stones are of two people, one called Ann Thomas (Maddock) who is also known as the Maid of Cefn Ydfa and the other stone is of Will Hopcyn her true love at the time. This story is known as the “Welsh Romeo and Juliet.”

Will hopcyn was born in 1700 in Llangynywd and was a Thatcher, Poet as well as many other professions. Ann and Will met when they were both in their 20’s at Cefn Ydfa while Will was doing maintenance work, and both became deep and passionately in love with one another instantly. Ann’s mother found out about them and was outraged by them mixing as Ann was rich while Hopcyn was just a tradesman, this caused their relationship to be forbidden. The pair after that would meet in secret, Ann’s mother found out and confined her to her room and wanted her to marry Anthony

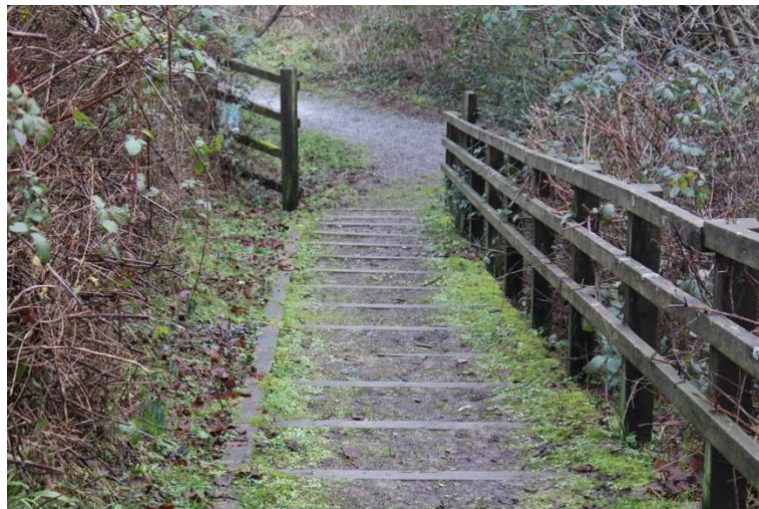
Maddock, who was a solicitor. Will hopcyn and Ann through the help of a servant were able to still communicate by letters where they would confess their love for one another which was then discovered by Ann's mother, so Ann was banned from having supplies to create letters. Once the letters stopped Will thought he had been rejected so they didn't hear from one another and moved on. Ann was then guided by her mother to Marry Anthony Maddock which she did in May 1725, 2 years later she gave birth to a daughter who died, a few days after Ann also passed away. Before Ann passed away Will returned to Cefn Ydfa after dreaming of her passing he discovered she was in fact alive but was seriously ill. Ann cried out for her one true love, but Anthony Maddock abandoned her. Eventually Ann's mother brought Will to her and Ann fell into his embrace and died in his arms. Anthony moved on to marry another heiress while Will Hopcyn lived for 14 more years and never married. Will created a poem, sung in a welsh folk tune to express his heart break known as "Bugeilio'r Gwenith Gwyn."

(<https://www.geoffbrookes.co.uk/?p=1418>)



(Photos of the stones)

I chose to focus on this as I had heard briefly of the story but not fully or in depth and never realised that the stones had such a deep meaning behind them as I would always walk past them but never questioned it, the story used to be taught a few years ago but feel most people from the area don't know how powerful the story is so that's another reason why putting the exhibition around this space appealed to me as it also dawned on me that we can be oblivious to the world and history around us. I would place my photos along the steps leading up to it as feel that will bring attention to the story and also get others thinking, the area also seems like the perfect fit for it as the brambles remind me of some sort of fairy tale it is also a personal space to connect with the images. Steps pictured below.



My ideas behind my exhibition would have my pictures and also have an extract of the story at each end so the person could decide if they wanted to read and then walk the steps or if the person wanted to walk the steps, view the images, how they interact with the images would be based on their personal choices. The photos are a range of ideas, to set the story and explore the abilities. As I used Polaroid film in my last project I wanted to use that again and explore that further to play on the history of polaroid's making the images look quite vintage in b&w film, the photos are of Llangynywd to portray the idea behind there's so much history to explore that goes unknown. The film came out underexposed and some overexposed,

so I was going to take new photo's, but I liked the effect and atmosphere it created. My other photos resemble the area and my history within it along with others within my area. Also taking photos of places that had significant meaning to the story such as the church they were both buried at, the house they lived at, the memorial etc. I also attempted some polaroid emulsion lifts which are not included in this as they failed but I aim to practise those and if this exhibition was going to happen I would definitely use that technique, along with the dark room feel those would've been effective and worked well so that'd be an aim next time.

I looked at the work of Stephen Gill and his use of interperating space within his project "Coexistence." The project was based around documenting an industrial wasteland and the remains of the steelmaking that happened in a city of Dudelange. Though his work doesn't correlate with my topic specifically I did find his images incredibly unique as I don't think I've come across anything like it. He used a microscope to compare "parallels between patterns and process in the pond and those in our own lives as individual humans within societies" (Time magazine, 2011)

Stephan Gill's work: <https://time.com/62087/coexistence-by-stephen-gill/>

Stephan Gill portfolio and pictures: <https://www.stephengill.co.uk/portfolio/portfolio/nggallery/album-1-2/coexistence>

