

2. **Write a 750 word review** of your visit to the museum: How are past civilisations being presented at this museum? (25% of the module mark)

In a small upstairs room of the Carmarthenshire County museum sits a temporary exhibition on the life and legacy of Ernest Harold Jones, and his work in early excavation in Egypt. Jones being an artist turned archaeologist who spend his early years living, studying and working in Carmarthen Town.



Figure 1 Sketch of Exhibition space

The room featured 5 cabinets in the centre; each filled with a wide range of Ancient Egyptian artifacts. Which largely ranged in purpose, from a wooden headrest to pottery to jewellery. There was a lack of cohesion between these items, with them spanning across multiple time period across

ancient Egypt, although most items had a brief description regarding their use, they lacked further detail, regarding origins and era. Although it was organised slightly with all pottery being placed together in one shelving unit. However, it was clear why this wide range of items had a place in Carmarthenshire Museum due to their connection with Harold Jones, and that was made very clear by the signage, the lack of cohesion of the items displayed did not take away from the overall effectiveness of the exhibit as it was not about them. They were effective at adding visual intrigue to the room and make it more appealing for a wider audience without sacrificing the purpose of the museum which is (according to the official website) as a "*Museum tells the stories of people, power and protest across Carmarthenshire*" [Cofgar. (2022).]

The story of the exhibition was told through the signage placed around the room, following the signs clockwise around the room. These signs presented the information in a way that was easily understood, using a large serif font that was easy to read and made visually interesting through the use of photographs and drawing. The information was displayed bilingually with the Welsh placed on the left side and English on the right. Furthermore the signs contained speech bubbles written from the perspective of

Harold Jones, these contain a much more simplified version of the story directed toward children.

Sitting on the windowsill below the signage where several copies of a large booklet featuring 35 pages of text, going into increased detail regarding both Howard Jones and the Artefacts included within the exhibition, although the text was in a small font and somewhat hard to digest it was clear these were not for everyone to read, only those who wished to have a greater understanding of the exhibition.

The text-based information successfully accommodated a large range of visitors to the museum.



Figure 2 Example of Signage



Figure 3 Children's Activity

The speech bubble texts are not the only thing that is targeted towards children in the exhibit, in one corner of the room, on a table is a life-sized doll of a human body, with a hatch that lifts up to a chest cavity, full of knitted replicase of few different organs such as the liver and lungs, with the goal being for children to take out the organs and sort them into the appropriate 'canopic jars' reparented with the image of the jars being attached to plastic containers.

Although this has very little to do with Harold Jones it is an effective way to keep children entertained while providing an educational introduction to aspects of Ancient Egyptian society and practices.

However, exhibition also has large focus on art, with Harold Jones main role was as an artist on exhibitions and the room definitely reflects this, with the wall space (that not being taken up with the signage) is full of his works. The works are set out almost chronically with the first wall being fitted with two large Oil paintings, originally seeming



Figure 4 Photograph of Jones's work

unfit for the Ancient Egyptian theming filling the room, however once the information has been read its place in the exhibit has Harold Jones's early work while he was living in Carmarthen was made clear.

The majority of the artworks in the exhibit are his watercolour works depicting scenes for the excavations working as a physical representation of the connection between Carmarthen and ancient Egypt and was highly effective.

As a reflection of past societies it is limited, the items featured as mismatched, lacking detail descriptions or information, however this does not mean the exhibition was limited, as its purpose in the museum was

intended to reflect life in Carmarthen and not ancient Egypt, this does well, the life and work of Harold Jones is reflected effectively.

Bibliography

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