

WLCoW Stage Award Winner: George Haylock

MynyddOEDD / MountainMEMORY Project



The Worshipful Livery Company of Wales Stage Award has enabled me to be part of an exciting project entitled MynyddOEDD / MountainMEMORY, working alongside artist Marc Rees, film maker Simon Clode and Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru.

The project tells the important, yet recondite, story of the Epynt Mountain clearance by the War Office to create the Sennybridge Training Area near Brecon. In 1940, 54 homes had to be vacated, the Drovers Arms, a primary school and chapel were all closed, and 219 people were obliged to leave. The Epynt's past was eradicated and homes destroyed, to be replaced by representations of foreign war zones.

As an experienced model maker with a passion for history, my role in this project is to create models of buildings which formed part of this rural community. The funds have enabled me to attend project workshops where the team brainstormed ideas, and to spend time in the archive at St Fagans National Museum of History, pouring over original maps, sketches and photographs.

I am currently creating a 1/25 scale farmhouse, influenced by various buildings found in archival material, such as the images below (used with permission) taken in June 1940 by Iorwerth Peate, founder of the Welsh Folk Museum.



(Credit: National Museum Wales)



(Credit: National Museum Wales)



(Credit: National Museum Wales)

Here's my initial 1/25 scale scratch-built model made from mixed media.





Next, I applied layers of clay, grit and other products to replicate the various surfaces of the weather-beaten farmhouse.



Then, I spray painted the model with grey primer, in preparation for painting and weathering to create a realistic finish.



I also decided to commission a group of 1/25 scale figures, having seen a photograph of a family outside their Epynt farmhouse. I painted them in a grayscale scheme which hints at the fading memories of the Epynt community.



(Credit: National Museum Wales)

It is planned to display the finished farmhouse model at the Awards Dinner in Cardiff on 4th March 2022. In the spring, we will take it to the Epynt and film it on the site of a former farmhouse. This footage will form part of a short evocative film including excerpts of archive interviews with Epynt residents. We will share this on social media, including the Atgofion Epynt Facebook page, as a call out for further recollections to inform the ongoing creative process.

The impact of COVID restrictions on the cultural sector has resulted in delays to the project, so there is still much to do, and the culmination of MynyddOEDD / MountainMEMORY has been rescheduled for 2023 at St Fagans National Museum of History. I feel privileged to be part of the re-telling of this forgotten story, and I am inspired by the collaborative style of working I see in the creative industries in Wales - between established artists and people, like me, who are just starting out.

George Haylock