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Augustus John letters,

Tabl cynnwys | Table of contents

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Gwybodaeth grynodeb | Summary information

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Hanes gweinyddol / Braslun bywgraffyddol | Administrative history | Biographical sketch

Nodyn | Note

Augustus Edwin John, artist, was born at Tenby in Pembrokeshire. He studied at the Slade School in London between 1894 and 1899. A diving accident in 1897 caused severe head injuries, affecting his personality and painting style. He married Ida Nettleship in 1901, and they had five children. At about the same time, he was appointed to teach art at the University of Liverpool, where he was taught the Romani language. Periods of travelling throughout England and Wales in a gypsy caravan inspired much of his work before World War 1. In 1902, he met Dorothy MacNeill, and gave her the Romani name Dorelia.

She became his most important model and lifelong inspiration; she moved to Paris with Augustus's sister, the artist Gwen John, the following year. Augustus based himself mainly in Paris in 1906-1907. After Ida's death in 1907, Augustus and Dorelia married and had four children. His early period of work was characterised by drawings from life, notably of contemporaries including Ida and Dorelia and his sisters, as well as portraits in oils influenced by the Old Masters and an experimental series of etchings. He was elected President of the National Portrait Gallery in 1914. During World War I, he spent a brief time in France employed by the Canadian government as a war artist, and was official artist at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. After a period of painting landscapes and employing a more modern impressionistic idiom, he became increasingly successful as a portrait painter. His subjects included Thomas Hardy, T. E. Lawrence, George Bernard Shaw, and David Lloyd George. He was elected to the Royal Academy in 1928, resigned in 1938, and was re-elected in 1940. He was elected President of the Royal Cambrian Academy of Art in 1934 and President of the Gypsy Lore Society in 1938. In 1942 he was awarded the Order of Merit for services to art. He died at Fryern Court, Hampshire, his home since 1927, in 1961.

Natur a chynnwys | Scope and content

Seven letters, 1955-1956, from Augustus John to Mrs Edith Saunders of the Hotel Santa Clara, Torremolinos, where the artist stayed from December 1954 to March 1955 (ff. 1-7 verso), together with one letter, 1955, from Dorelia McNeill to the same (f. 8); the letters contain mainly personal news and references to John painting a portrait of Mrs Saunders.

Nodiadau | Notes

Nodiadau teitl | Title notes

Ffynhonnell | Immediate source of acquisition

Maggs Bros.; London; Purchase; July 1997; B1997/32.

Trefniant | Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically by author at NLW.

Cyfyngiadau ar fynediad | Restrictions on access

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Amodau rheoli defnydd | Conditions governing use

Usual copyright laws apply. Information regarding the ownership of Augustus John copyright can be found at <http://tyler.hrc.utexas.edu/> (viewed May 2009).

Disgrifiadau deunydd | Related material

Other papers of Augustus John include NLW MSS 11067C, 21980C, 22022C, 22155B, 22305D, 22312D, 22775-22803 (Augustus John Papers), 23508D, 23851D.

Nodiadau eraill | Other notes

- **Statws cyhoeddiad | Publication status:** Published
- **Dynodwr sefydliad | Institution identifier:** Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru = The National Library of Wales

Pwyntiau mynediad | Access points

- Saunders, Edith, of Torremolinos -- Portraits. (pwnc) | (subject)
- McNeill, Dorelia, 1881-1969. (pwnc) | (subject)
- Saunders, Edith, of Torremolinos. (pwnc) | (subject)