

Ten Years in Wales



Water Colours by Lim Gek Kheng

December 2025

Foreword

We (Gek and David) moved to Wales in October 2015. The collection of miniature water colour paintings in this exhibition represents a snapshot of our first 10 years here. It includes landscapes and seascapes of memorable places we have visited in different parts of Wales

Cover page:

Bungalow in Hengoed, Caerphilly County, where
we lived from 2016 to 2023

Caerphilly Castle

First Built Late 12th Century

This is the largest castle in Wales, and second largest in the whole of UK. My first encounter with this castle was in 2013 when David and I spent 5 months in the UK while living in Penang. We were so impressed by it that we decided to live in the county of Caerphilly when we returned to the UK from Penang two years later.



Water Colour: 2in x 2.75in



Water Colour: 2.0in x 2.75in

Brecon Canal

Opened to Brecon in December 1800

Not long after settling in Hengoed, we and our two Singaporean friends (Alice and MaryAnn) spent four days cruising the canal, starting from Gilwern going north towards Brecon.

It was an exciting experience learning how to pilot a narrowboat, guiding it under 40-plus bridges, and going through 5 locks and a tunnel. And so relaxing to amble on the towpath and explore villages along the canal amidst the greenery of the Brecon Beacons.

Beach at Borth-y-Gest, Porthmadog

This ordinary looking beach somehow left a deep impression on me when David and I with Alice and MaryAnn stayed in Porthmadog, the base for our holiday in Snowdonia in 2016 summer. Such a tranquil place to be watching the changing colours of the sky at dusk.

We revisited the beach again in 2024.



Water Colour: 1.50in 2.25in



Water Colour: 1.50in x 2.25in

Rhossili Beach

This beauty spot in The Gower Peninsula is my favourite beach. My first visit was in 2016, on a day trip from Hengoed. I was taken by the breathtaking coastal scenery. Subsequently, me and David celebrated our 10th and 11th wedding anniversaries by holidaying there.

Pen-y-Garreg Dam, Elan Valley

Meaning 'Head of the Stone', it was built to supply Birmingham with drinking water. It took 9 years to complete (1895-1904). The tower was built in the Birmingham Baroque style. It is a very small dam, holding just over two weeks' worth of water for the city's supplies when full.

We took the opportunity to visit Elan when attending a Morgan Club anniversary dinner at Llandrindod Wells.



Water Colour: 1.50 in x 2.00in



Water Colour: 1.50in x 2.00in

Manorbier Castle

First Built Late 11th Century

We saw this castle together with Swi, a Singaporean friend who visited us in 2018. The three of us spent a few days exploring parts of Pembrokeshire while staying in Tenby.

Ogmore-by-Sea

Ogmore has a strange geographic story to tell. The rock formations date back from the carboniferous period (290-300 million years ago) when Britain was near the equator.

David took me to Ogmore when I first visited him in Bridgend in 2006. I will never forget how I struggled to walk against the high winds there. This painting was done after Polly went there with us on a day trip before her migration to Australia.



Water Colour: 1.50in x 2.25 in



Water Colour: 2.0in x 2.75in

Bridgeman Court

We moved to this retirement complex, consisting of 34 flats, in Penarth in December 2023. Such a brilliant location! Less than 5 mins walk to the Penarth Pier and Esplanade, and so close to greenery with Alexandra Park and Windsor Gardens nearby. Walking along the Esplanade and enjoying the views of the Bristol Channel has become almost a daily routine for us.

Good morning, Penarth

It is a pleasure to wake up to the view of a colourful dawn through our living room windows. This does not happen very often. So, it is such a delight to see the golden light and sometimes pinkish or reddish clouds in the sky.



Water Colour: 1.50in x 2.25in



Water Colour: 1.50in x 2.25in

Full moon over the Penarth Pier

Another pleasure is the sight of a full moon, and its reflection on the water of the Severn Estuary. On some days, the Penarth Pavilion is lit up with different colours. The painting captures red lights shining on its walls on a full moon night.

Cefn Onn Park

Short train rides from Penarth take us to Cardiff and its neighbouring parks. Since moving to Bridgeman Court, we paid our first ever visits to Heath Park, Roath Park, Lisvane and Llanishen Reservoirs.

Our favourite is Cefn Onn Park, a nature wonderland in autumn. And in spring, it is filled with the scents of Rhododendrons and azaleas.



Water Colour 2.00in x 2.75in



Water Colour: 2.0in x 2.75in

Llangollen Canal, Froncysyllte

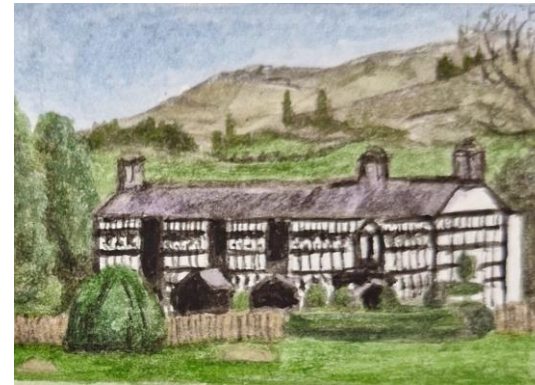
The destination of our first 'backpacking' after moving to Penarth was Llangollen. There was so much to do in this charming town: taking a ride on the Heritage Railway, cruising along the canal to Pontcysyllte Aquaduct, climbing up Castell Dinas Bran, a hill overlooking Llangollen, and taking leisurely walks along the canal.

The most thrilling experience was cruising on a narrow strip of water in mid-air, on the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. It was a masterpiece of early 19th century engineering, and now a UNESCO Heritage site.

Plas Newydd, The Ladies of Llangollen House

First Built 1470

This handsome house was the home of Eleanor and Sarah who ran away from Ireland in 1778 to avoid being forced into unwanted marriages. They happily set up a new life in Llangollen. Over the years, numerous distinguished visitors called upon them, including Byron, Shelly, Wellington, and Wordsworth, the last of whom wrote a song about them.



Water Colour: 2.00in x 2.75in



Water Colour: 2.00in x 2.75in

Chirk Castle

Completed 1301

We visited Chirk in April 2024. The castle has a fascinating history. Sir Thomas Middleton bought it in 1595 with his descendants only moving out in 2004. The family's coat of arms has a Red Hand atop of it. They say a dying Lord had male twins as heirs and there was a question of inheritance. To determine who inherited the estate, a race was held, and the winner was determined by the first brother whose hand crossed the finishing line. As the race neared its conclusion, the trailing twin, aware that his fortune was disappearing, chopped off his hand and threw it across the line in a desperate attempt to be first and to secure his inheritance. Not true, of course, but a good story, no?

Heritage Railways

We enjoyed a few heritage train rides during our rail-based backpacking holidays in 2024. The Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Heritage Railway from Porthmadog towards Carnarvon and towards Ffestiniog, and another one from Aberystwyth to Devil's Bridge

We also must thank Transport for Wales for our rail journeys to different parts of the country. Memories of the gorgeous scenic journeys on the Cambrian Coast Line to Aberystwyth and the Heart of the Wales Line from Llandrindod Wells to Swansea will stay with us for a long time.



Water Colour: 1.50in x 2.25in



Water Colour: 1.50in x 2.25in

Sunset at Aberystwyth

Watching spectacular sunsets is our much-loved activity. Whenever there is an opportunity to capture the glorious rays before nightfall during our travels, we would not want to miss it.

We took numerous photographs while waiting for the sun to sink below the horizon at Aberystwyth.

Acknowledgements

The usual thanks go to Google and Wikipedia as the sources of the stories.