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## Cymorth chwilio | Finding Aid - Augustus John letters, (NLW MS 21980C.)

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Allt Penglais

Aberystwyth

Ceredigion

United Kingdom

SY23 3BU



01970 632 800



01970 615 709



[gofyn@llgc.org.uk](mailto:gofyn@llgc.org.uk)



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# Augustus John letters,

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## Crynodeb o wybodaeth | Summary of information

<b>Lleoliad   Repository:</b>	Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru = The National Library of Wales
<b>Teitl   Title:</b>	Augustus John letters,
<b>Cod cyfeirnod   Reference code:</b>	NLW MS 21980C.
<b>Virtua system control number [alternative]:</b>	vtls004265511
<b>GEAC system control number [alternative]:</b>	(WIAbNL)0000265511
<b>Dyddiad   Date:</b>	1926-1952. (dyddiad creu   date of creation)
<b>Disgrifiad ffisegol   Physical description:</b>	20 ff. Guarded and filed.
<b>Lleoliad ffisegol   Physical location:</b>	ARCH/MSS (GB0210)
<b>Dyddiadau creu, golygu a dileu   Dates of creation, revision and deletion:</b>	
<b>Nodyn   Note [generalNote]:</b>	Title based on contents.
<b>Nodyn   Note [generalNote]:</b>	Preferred citation: NLW MS 21980C.

## Hanes gweinyddol / Braslun bywgraffyddol | Administrative history | Biographical sketch

### Nodyn | Note

Augustus Edwin John, artist, was born at Tenby, Pembrokeshire, on 4 January 1878. He studied at the Slade School in London between 1894 and 1899. A diving accident in 1897 caused severe head injuries, reputedly 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, giving 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, Dorelia became John's partner (they never formally married). They had four children together, both before and after Ida's death. 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 1 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.

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## **Natur a chynnwys | Scope and content**

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Seventeen letters and one note, 1926-1952, from Augustus John, ten of them to Sean O'Casey (ff. 2-13) and the remainder to the journalist George Bilainkin. Those to Sean O'Casey contain mainly personal news, but refer also to O'Casey's work and to John's designs for the set of 'The Silver Tassie', staged in 1929 (ff. 4 verso, 6, 7). Extracts from them were published in Eileen O'Casey, Sean (London, 1971). The letters to Bilainkin (ff. 14-20) refer mainly to the latter's articles on John.

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## **Nodiadau | Notes**

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### **Nodiadau teitl | Title notes**

### **Ffynhonnell | Immediate source of acquisition**

ff. 2-13; Sotheby's; London; Purchased at auction, lot 229; 8 December, 1983  
ff. 14-20; Henry Bristow; Ringwood; Purchase; 1984

### **Cyfyngiadau ar fynediad | Restrictions on access**

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### **Amodau rheoli defnydd | Conditions governing use**

Usual copyright laws apply.

**Rhestrau cymorth | Finding aids**

The contents of NLW MSS 21701-22852 are indexed in greater detail in Handlist of Manuscripts in the National Library of Wales, vol. 8 (Aberystwyth, 1999).

**Disgrifiadau deunydd | Related material**

For the papers of Augustus John, see NLW MSS 22775-803.

**Nodiadau eraill | Other notes**

- **Dynodwr sefydliad | Institution identifier**: Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru = The National Library of Wales

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**Pwyntiau mynediad | Access points**

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- John, Augustus, 1878-1961 -- Correspondence (pwnc) | (subject)
- Bilainkin, George, 1903- (pwnc) | (subject)
- O'Casey, Sean, 1880-1964. (pwnc) | (subject)