

TARNISHED EARTH

Swansea

October 2011



Project Report



Swansea Environmental Forum
Fforwm Amgylcheddol Abertawe

Amgueddfa
Genedlaethol
y Glannau
National
Waterfront
Museum
STOR SWYTHYRAT A
MUSEM CENYR
WALEY DDESYR OY
INDUSTRY A INNOVATION



The co-operative



Background

Following the overwhelming success of the Earth from the Air exhibition in Swansea in 2007, Swansea Environmental Forum decided that it should work with partners to bring a major public exhibition or event to Swansea every two years, as part of the Sustainable Swansea Initiative. In 2009, the internationally renowned Hard Rain exhibition was brought to Swansea, with the Vital Signs Swansea exhibition being created as a local response to its themes.

Aware of this commitment, the chair of the Sustainable Swansea Steering Group began the search in Autumn 2011 for a suitable exhibition for 2012. Contact was initially made with *Wecomunic8* (the company that manages Earth from the Air) in late 2011 about the possibility of receiving the Tarnished Earth exhibition but it was not until May that serious discussions were started between project partners.



Tarnished Earth Exhibition

Tarnished Earth is a free-to-view outdoor exhibition of photographs by Jiri Rezac which tell the story of one of the world's biggest ecological disasters: the extraction of oil from tar sands below Canada's magnificent Boreal Forest.

The exhibition consists of 24 large scale photographs displayed on 12 two-sided stands with captions and some additional environmental messages. Each stand has low-energy lighting to allow viewing after dark, and one stand also has an interactive touch screen computer enabling visitors to enter their details and have their photograph taken as part of a national campaign photo petition. Initially, the campaign petition was to keep tar sands out of Europe and over 20,000 signatures were delivered to the EU Parliament in March 2011 to influence the debate on new EU climate change legislation. When the exhibition came to Swansea, the petition was asking the UK Government to invest in clean renewable energy.



The exhibition was commissioned, and the tour funded, by the Co-operative, working in partnership with WWF-UK and Greenpeace. It is part of a wider Toxic Fuel Campaign, which seeks to garner public support against unconventional fossil fuels.

The exhibition tour is managed by Wecomunic8 and the Co-operative campaign has also supported screenings of films linked to the theme, and created a schools resource pack.

Project Partners

Swansea Environmental Forum and Sustainable Swansea

Swansea Environmental Forum (SEF) is the lead strategic partnership for all aspects of the natural and built



environment in the City & County of Swansea. It was originally formed in 1985 to bring together organisations working in the environmental sector in Swansea. SEF was responsible for initiating various projects including setting-up the Swansea Environment Centre and the Sustainable Swansea Initiative. The latter is a partnership project, managed by SEF, which aims to make Swansea a more sustainable place to live, work and visit by raising awareness and understanding of sustainability through a programme of innovative community projects and high profile events.



Swansea Environment Centre

Swansea Environment Centre is a focus for environmental information, education and activity in south-west Wales and provides administrative support to SEF and the Sustainable Swansea Initiative.

The National Waterfront Museum

The National Waterfront Museum has supported several activities of SEF and Swansea Environment Centre and been the venue and a key partner for the previous exhibitions: Earth from the Air and Hard Rain / Vital Signs Swansea.

Amgueddfa
Genedlaethol
y Glannau
STORI DIWYDIANT A
BLAENGAREDD CYMRU

National
Waterfront
Museum
WALES' STORY OF
INDUSTRY & INNOVATION



The co-operative

The Co-operative

Co-operative Member Services have provided funding, resources and support for many events and activities of SEF and Swansea

Environment Centre for many years. They have sponsored the Sustainable Swansea Awards and were a key partner and sponsor for the Hard Rain / Vital Signs Swansea exhibitions.

City and County of Swansea

A variety of service teams within the City and County of Swansea, such as the Special Events Team, has provided crucial help and support for exhibitions and other activities organised as part of the Sustainable Swansea Initiative. Funding and resources have also often been provided by or through the Council.





Swansea Environmental Education Forum
Fforum Addysg yr Amgylchedd Abertawe

Swansea Environmental Education Forum

Swansea Environmental Education Forum (SEEF) is a local network of active people and organisations committed to working to improve the quality of Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship

(ESDGC) throughout Swansea. SEEF worked with education officers of the National Waterfront Museum and other partners to provide school engagement activities for previous exhibitions brought to Swansea as part of the Sustainable Swansea Initiative.

Wecommunic8 Ltd.



This company specialises in large scale, open air, free to the public exhibitions, and started with the Earth from the Air exhibition that was sited at the Natural History Museum in London before touring the UK, including Swansea. Other exhibitions organised by the company include Britain from the Air, in partnership with the Royal Geographic Society.

Project Development and Management

An initial meeting of local partners was held in late May involving representatives of Sustainable Swansea, Swansea Environment Centre, the City and County of Swansea Special Events Team and the National Waterfront Museum. The implications of bringing the Tarnished Earth exhibition to Swansea were discussed. Wecommunic8 offered a three week period in October 2011 and, after some discussion, it was agreed that this could include part of half-term, in order to take advantage of a greater footfall. A key factor, given the timescale and lack of identified resources, was the fact that the exhibition was fully funded. It was agreed to proceed and a project team was formed, which included a local representative of the Co-operative.



It was agreed that the exhibition would be situated along the front of the National Waterfront Museum, on Museum land, and so the Museum staff would be responsible for overseeing the erection of the exhibition. The City and County of Swansea Special Events Team would just be available to advise, if required. The National Waterfront Museum also agreed to cover the cost of the electricity used for lighting the exhibition.

Sustainable Swansea agreed to take the lead in organising any associated events and activities, and the promotion of the exhibition. Subsequently, other partners contributed to the costs and staffing of associated events and marketing.

Events and Activities

Exhibition Launch Event

The exhibition was erected in the morning of Thursday 6th October and the official launch took place on the evening of Friday 7th October. Approximately 150 people were specifically invited, including senior and strategic officer (members of the Local Service Board and Policy Task Group), local politicians (MPs, AMs, MEPs and council cabinet members) and guests of the partners (e.g. SEF Executive Committee and Co-operative Member Committee). Unfortunately, there was a problem with some of the initial email invites and though a second email invite was sent out, after the problem was discovered, it gave very short notice of the event. Nevertheless, the launch went well with short speeches from three of the partner organisations.

Film Screenings

Two film screenings took place to coincide with the exhibition – Dirty Oil, which gives a behind-the-scenes look at the tar sands industry, was screened on Sunday 16th October at 5.30pm. This was timed to directly follow a Co-operative West Wales Area Members' meeting held that afternoon, which included a presentation by the chair of the Sustainable Swansea Steering Group on the awareness-raising work of SEF and its partners. On Tuesday 18th October at 7pm, the multi-award winning film Gasland was screened. This film looks at unconventional gas drilling in the USA, also known as 'fracking'. It was felt that this would be of particular interest as this controversial method is currently being explored in South Wales. Following the screening, there was a 40 minute discussion on the issue. Approximately 25 people attended the screening of Dirty Oil and about 35 the screening of Gasland.



School Visits and Workshops

Due to time and resource limitations, it was only possible to directly arrange two school visits and workshop sessions. In each case, the school group visited the exhibition and then walked to the Environment Centre for a workshop with Phil Williams, Plan-It Eco, for a presentation and discussion on themes linked to the exhibition. St. Joseph's Primary School brought a class of about 30 Year 6 pupils and a group of 25–30 Geography and World Development sixth form students came from Olchfa School. The workshops were arranged by the SEEF Co-ordinator and funded through the Environment Centre's education programme. Many other schools visited the Museum during the period (over 2,300 pupils and over 20 teachers) and some of these will have taken the opportunity to view the exhibition.

The Co-operative sponsored the production of an education pack, entitled spOILt, to accompany the exhibition. It was written by a group of young people in mid-Wales and includes a DVD. This pack was given to the two schools that attended the workshops, to teachers that attended the launch event and to other teachers that visited the Museum during the exhibition.

Campaign Petitioning

Members of the local Greenpeace group organised petitioning in support of their clean energy campaign on two of the Sundays while the exhibition was in Swansea. The volunteers interacted with members of the public as they viewed the exhibition and encouraged them to sign a petition. The Museum provided a table in the entrance hall for them to use as a base.

Funding and Support

The exhibition was provided free-of-charge by Co-operative, through Wecomunic8, so there were therefore no hire fees, or set-up or maintenance costs. Neither were the local partners required to provide insurance and security cover – important and costly requirements for the Earth from the Air exhibition.

An electrical hook-up was needed to power the lighting and this was organised, and the cost covered, by the Museum. The Co-operative covered the cost of a full page promotion in the What's On in Swansea Magazine and also the cost of refreshments for the launch and film screenings. The Museum covered some of the staff/security requirements for associated events with any outstanding costs picked up by the Co-operative. The Environment Centre covered the cost of the schools workshop leader through its education programme, which is partly funded by the Countryside Council for Wales.

Though initially, the chair of Sustainable Swansea contributed project management time for free, Swansea Environmental Forum was able to cover some of these costs through its Swansea Change grant from the City and County of Swansea. Officers from each of the partner organisations generously gave their time to attend meetings, help with the project management and attend associated events.

Publicity and Marketing

The project partners used websites, e-bulletins, newsletters and other outlets to promote the exhibition and associated events. Information about the exhibition and events was circulated through various email groups and blogs, e.g. partners' member groups and the Transition Swansea Ning. Swansea CVS ran an article about the exhibition in its quarterly newsletter, Sector 3, and also its monthly e-bulletins.

As mentioned above, the Co-operative agreed to pay for a full page promotional advert for the exhibition in the September/October 2011 edition of the popular What's On in Swansea magazine. Though this had to be prepared at very short notice to meet the deadline, all partners were supportive and responded very quickly to requests to approve the copy and layout. We were unable to include details of any associated events because of the tight timescale but the exhibition had good exposure with the main ad appearing on page 3 and an additional photograph and promotion being included in the event listings towards the back of the magazine.

The advertisement is for an exhibition titled "tarnished earth" with the subtitle "an exhibition of devastating power". It is presented by "The co-operative" in conjunction with "WWT GREENPEACE". The main image shows a landscape with a large oil rig in the distance. Text on the ad includes: "Outside the National Waterfront Museum, Swansea 8th - 27th October", "Tarnished Earth is a dramatic open air gallery of photographs by Jiri Rezac that tells the story of one of the world's biggest ecological disasters.", "This FREE outdoor exhibition shows how Canada's magnificent Boreal Forest is being destroyed and polluted by the rush to extract oil from the tar sands just below the surface. The photographs, illuminated at night, contrast the destruction caused by the oil extraction with the area's pristine wilderness and the traditional way of life of indigenous First Nation Cree.", "Tarnished Earth has been staged by The Co-operative Group in conjunction with WWT-UK and Greenpeace, and is touring cities across the UK. It is being hosted in Swansea by the National Waterfront Museum and Swansea Environmental Forum, as part of the Sustainable Swansea Initiative, with support from the Environment Centre and the City and County of Swansea.", "For details of the programme of activities, events and films being organised to coincide with the exhibition, contact the Environment Centre on 01792 480200." The ad also features logos for WWT, Greenpeace, and other partners, and mentions "for an gallery organised by Wecomunic8".

Several press releases were issued, primarily to the South Wales Evening Post, from Swansea Environmental Forum, the National Waterfront Museum and the Co-operative. At least three short articles were published, including one photo.

Project Evaluation

Swansea Environmental Forum has limited resources so it is important that it evaluates the benefits of projects such as this. It is without question that this exhibition, and its associated activities, did not have the profile or impact of previous exhibitions. The time of year, the short timescale, the limited resources and number of partners, and the size and theme of the exhibition will all have contributed to this. However, a key balancing factor is the fact that the project cost so little and took so little time and effort to organise. The cost to impact ratio is probably high compared to previous exhibition and Sustainable Swansea activities.



Attendance and Participation Figures

It is impossible to determine how many people actually interacted with the exhibition but the National Waterfront Museum has recorded a footfall of over 14,300 people during the period. It might be fair to say that a good proportion of these would have seen the exhibition and that many would have read or looked at some of it.

65 photo petitions were completed using the interactive computer screen and a further 59 online petitions were made while the exhibition was in Swansea (though these would not necessarily all be people who had seen or heard about the exhibition in Swansea). Greenpeace volunteers had 78 petition cards filled over the two days that they were with the exhibition.

About 30 people attended the exhibition launch and approximately 60-70 people in total attended the two film screenings. About 60 pupils and 5 teachers attended the school workshops.

Project Outcomes

The primary desired outcomes of the project were raising awareness and engaging the public in global and local environmental issues. Though it is very difficult to assess the change in level of awareness, understanding and engagement through the exhibition, and any behaviour change or actions that come about as a result of it, it may be fair to say that a good proportion of those that viewed the exhibition, attended events or even just saw publicity about the exhibition, would have been effected to some extent.

An important aspect of the project was the continuation and development of partnership working and engagement of partners in environmental awareness-raising. It also helped to maintain the profile of SEF, Sustainable Swansea and environmental issues in general. The project provided a useful link to the Low Carbon Swansea project – a key priority of SEF – and with it, an opportunity to communicate with politicians and community leaders, through an invite to the launch and the exhibition, even if few actually attended.

Follow-up Activities



Tarnished Earth Mobile Exhibition

The Co-operative Member Services for the Central and Eastern Region of England commissioned an indoor mobile version of Tarnished Earth. As it was not possible to engage many schools with the exhibition in October 2011, it has been suggested that this exhibition could be used for a tour of secondary schools in Swansea.

Such a tour could be arranged by SEEF and would have minimal cost – just the transportation to and from Swansea and between schools, which could perhaps be arranged by the participating schools.

Co-operative Exhibition

2012 is the centenary year of the co-operative movement and Wecomunic8 is working with the Co-operative to develop a new exhibition which will go on tour to mark and celebrate this important milestone. It is anticipated that the exhibition will be fully-funded and have a similar format to Tarnished Earth, and it has been suggested that the National Waterfront Museum would provide a great venue for this exhibition. Though not on an environmental theme, it would certainly have some relevance to the work of Sustainable Swansea and other partners.

Wales from the Air Exhibition

Wecomunic8 also produced the Britain from the Air street gallery, in partnership with the Royal Geographical Society. The aim of this exhibition, which has a similar format to Earth from the Air and comes with a giant walk on map, is to encourage visitors to learn more about and enjoy Britain's most breathtaking and thought provoking environments.



This exhibition was considered by Sustainable Swansea in 2009 but it was felt that as only a few photos related to Wales, it had limited relevance to Swansea. Wecomunic8 however have indicated that they would be interested in developing a Wales version of the exhibition – Wales from the Air – featuring only photos of Welsh landscapes and locations. Such a project would undoubtedly require substantial development time, funding and sponsorship but may appeal to the Welsh Government, local businesses and several venues around Wales, and could be worth further consideration for 2013.