

FRANCIS, JOHN DEFFETT (1815 - 1901), painter and collector

Name: John Deffett Francis

Date of birth: 1815

Date of death: 1901

Parent: Mary Francis (née Grant)

Parent: John Francis

Gender: Male

Occupation: painter and collector

Area of activity: Art and Architecture; History and Culture

Author: Megan Ellis

Christened in S. Mary's church, Swansea, 2 June 1815, the son of a Swansea coachbuilder, John Francis, and his wife Mary, and a younger brother of [George Grant Francis](#), the antiquary. He devoted himself to painting, particularly portrait-painting, at an early age and eventually went to London where he became acquainted with Dickens, Thackeray, and Ruskin, and became one of the 'founders of the Savage Club.' He painted portraits of queen Victoria, Sir Robert Peel, and other notable persons, and several of these were engraved. He exhibited one picture at the Royal Academy in 1846 and several at other exhibitions between 1837 and 1860. Francis's assiduity as an art collector is remembered today by the existence of the Deffett Francis Art Gallery at Swansea, which contains the large collection of pictures and engravings which, with a considerable art library, he presented to the Swansea corporation during his lifetime. He also presented a similar large collection to the British Museum. He died at Swansea 21 February 1901.

Author

Megan Ellis, (1906 - 2001)

Sources

T. M. Rees, *Welsh painters, engravers and sculptors, 1527-1911* (1912)

Graves, *A Dictionary of Artists* (1893; 1901)

Allgemeines Lexicon der Bildenden Künstler

Further reading

Catalogue of the "Deffett Francis" collection in the Reference Department of the Swansea Public Library (Swansea 1887)

Wikipedia Article: [John Deffett Francis](#)

Additional Links

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 2868E: A satirical poem entitled Will of J\[ohn\] D\[effett\] Francis, Esq. \[1815-1901\], 30 June 1876](#)

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Wikidata: [Q19842165](#)

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