

**Cymdeithas Brycheiniog a Chyfeillion yr Amgueddfa**  
**Brecknock Society and Museum Friends**

**(Charity Number 518041)**

**Newsletter August 2014**

From the Chairman, John Gibbs (01874 730747 or [gibbs@keme.co.uk](mailto:gibbs@keme.co.uk))

**Brecknock Museum / Art Gallery and Library Project - 'Brecon Cultural Hub'**

The Planning Application for the project was finally being submitted to the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority as this newsletter went to press. This represented a significant delay in relation to the timetable that was envisaged when the HLF Project Plan was issued in October 2013. Our Stakeholder Representative, Council member Dr Mervyn Bramley, has kept us abreast of developments. The delay has mainly been caused by the extent of consultation and planning work needed to achieve the brief with a design that balances innovation and heritage. The Society and the Brecknock Art Trust, as local partners, have been in touch with Powys County Council to express our concern that excessive delay could impact on the HLF funding. PCC is issuing a press release and updating the Museum website to provide details of the submission.

**Recent Activities of the Society.**

**Revd Dr Thomas Coke Commemoration:** The Society played a significant part in putting in place the programme for the Thomas Coke Commemorative weekend on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. In particular we organised a session of talks held in Christ College (Thomas Coke's old school) on the Saturday morning and helped with the sourcing of material from various Methodist Collections for the special exhibition in the Museum ('Thomas Coke: from Brecon to the World') that ran from May 3<sup>rd</sup> until May 17<sup>th</sup>. Conan Daly from the Museum took the lead in arranging the display which was much applauded. In total, there were 805 visitors to the exhibition, 245 of whom came on the first day. Some pictures of the various events can be found at <http://www.methodistheritage.org.uk/thomas-coke-memorial-celebrations-brecon.htm>, together with the text of the talks and Bishop Tom Bickerton's sermon at the ecumenical Eucharist in the Cathedral on May 4<sup>th</sup>.

**The Mint and Joseph Harris:** On June 10<sup>th</sup> some 30 members and friends of the Society attended an event at Jenny and Peter Moody's home, Tredustan Court, where the Moodys gave us a fascinating account of the remarkable Joseph Harris and his work as King's Assay Master at the Royal Mint. Jenny has carried out a major body of research, which has done a great deal to give Joseph Harris the credit he deserves, and it was wonderful to hear about him at Tredustan, the house which belonged to his wife's family.

**Brecknock History Week and Open Doors (Sept 5<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>)**

The Brecknock History Forum has produced a booklet of events (enclosed). Please note especially 'Brecknock Remembers' at Theatr Brycheiniog on the evening of Friday

September 5<sup>th</sup>. This event involves many members of the Forum but is being hosted by us. Refreshments will be available. Note also the Henry Vaughan event at Llansantffraed Church (below).

### **Henry Vaughan celebration at Llansantffraed**

The Society takes a special interest in the great Breconshire poet, Henry Vaughan, with the annual memorial service in Llansantffraed Church being a regular feature of our programme. This year we have led a project to restore his 17<sup>th</sup> grave and its surroundings and to build a path up to it. At the same time, the Parish has re-laid much of the church floor under HLF funding. Do please join the celebration event at the Church at 3.00pm on Sunday September 14<sup>th</sup> to mark the completion of these works with an evensong service, with choir from the Priory Church in Abergavenny, Henry Vaughan poem and tribute, and period music. Refreshments will be served on conclusion at 4.00pm. For more information, see

<http://www.brecknocksociety.co.uk/henry-vaughan.html>

### **Review of Brycheiniog**

Last autumn, the Council created a small sub-committee to review our Journal Brycheiniog, with the aim of ensuring that it meets the needs of today. This sub-committee consists of me and fellow Council members Elizabeth Siberry and Nigel Clubb. In an attempt to gauge opinion, we have prepared a questionnaire and this is included with this letter. Do please complete it and return it as indicated. If you have not received an electronic version but would, nonetheless, like to complete it electronically, please let me know at the email address above.

### **Owen Sheers is the winner of the 2014 Roland Mathias Prize for Poetry**

The Roland Mathias prize forms part of the Wales Book of the Year Award, organised by Literature Wales. It was announced in July that this year's winner, and indeed also the overall Wales Book of the Year winner, was Owen Sheers; this for his verse drama 'Pink Mist' about three young soldiers who are deployed to Afghanistan. We look forward with much excitement to an event later this year, to be organised with Literature Wales, when Owen, who now lives in Talgarth, will tell us about his work and read us some of his poems.

### **Looking ahead to 2015**

Agincourt 600. A special committee has been formed to plan a series of events in the local area: this being a reflection of the important link between the battle and our part of Wales. The Society is very pleased that the foremost authority on the battle, Professor Ann Curry of Southampton University has accepted our invitation to give the 18<sup>th</sup> Sir John Lloyd Lecture on March 20<sup>th</sup> 2015 in Theatr Brycheiniog. The title will be 'The Battle of Agincourt and its Breconshire connection'.

**Contact details.**

With the high cost of postage, we are anxious that letters such as this are only sent to current members. The membership list is regularly updated but, with some popular Welsh surnames, it is sometimes difficult to match membership names/initials with details of standing orders. If you are receiving this mailing and are not a member (perhaps new occupant of an address etc) it would be very helpful if you could email the membership secretary Elizabeth Siberry - [elizabeth.siberry@gmail.com](mailto:elizabeth.siberry@gmail.com) or telephone on 01873812169, so that the list can be amended.

*John Gibbs*

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Website: <http://www.brecknocksociety.co.uk/society.html>