

**Cymdeithas Brycheiniog a Chyfeillion yr Amgueddfa**  
**Brecknock Society and Museum Friends**  
**(Charity Number 518041)**  
**Newsletter January 2018**

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

**'Y Gaer' Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery and Brecon Library Project -**

Since I last wrote a great deal has happened to what has previously been known as the Cultural Hub Brecon. The Museum & Art Gallery is beginning to emerge from scaffolding after the cleaning and repair of the stonework and there has been a very successful 'topping out' ceremony for the new building that will house the Brecon Library. For the BS&MF, Mervyn Bramley remains our principal link with the Powys CC project team over the redevelopment, and we are most grateful to him for his work. It is envisaged that the construction firm Kier will hand over the completed Y Gaer buildings to Powys CC during the summer and that the fitting out by further contractors can then begin. A 'soft' opening is planned for December and this will be followed by a ceremonial opening in 2019.

A financial contribution from the BS&MF ensured that a proper study and consultation preceded the choice of the name 'Y Gaer'. While some may not have welcomed this name, I myself respond positively - feeling, *inter alia*, that it shows that what may start as the camp of an invader can become, through the processes of assimilation, a manifestation of the rich cultural mixture that characterises Breconshire today!

As you will know from my special 'Appeal Newsletter' of last August, the BS&MF is seeking to raise £110,000 for the Museum & Art Gallery; this fund-raising falling under two main headings: the Interpretation project (£55.4K) and the Conservation & Display project (£54.6K). We have sought support from a major charitable foundation for the former project and have made the latter project the subject of an appeal to members of the Society and to a wider selection of potential donors with an interest in Breconshire. In addition, the BS&MF Council will allocate some of its remaining uncommitted funds (£25K maximum) from the sale of the old Museum to these projects.

Elements in the Conservation & Display Project include work on some of the Museum's treasures and the purchase of a specially-designed cabinet for the storage and display of works in our very important water-colour collection. As of last December, just under £25,000 had been raised and it is known that several local family Trusts will be considering our appeal shortly. Over 60 donations - both large and small - have so far been made and the Society is grateful for them all. If you have not yet made a donation yourself and are considering doing so, there could not be a better time to contribute to our conservation and display appeal! A reminder of the various ways of doing this can be found at the end of this letter.

Once the Museum & Art Gallery has reopened, volunteers will play a key role in welcoming people and in helping them to make the most of their visit. In this connection we held a well-attended meeting in October, at which a good number of members were present. We were very encouraged when a show of hands indicated that about three-quarters of those present would be interested in the idea of becoming a volunteer in the reopened museum, this being in addition to the very important team of volunteers who are already doing invaluable work on the collections while they are in store in Watton Mount. Powys CC together with the Society and other local partners will announce details of this volunteering role in the coming months.

**Membership Subscriptions**

The new membership subscription of £20 per household (no individual rate) applies from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018. Can I urge you to show your confidence in all that the society is seeking to do by altering your standing order in good time or by taking one out if you do not have one; it makes membership administration much easier with a single payment date for all and reduces both postage and the risk of cheques etc being lost. Please also consider signing up for Giftaid if you have not already done so.

I think it fair to say that the strength of our position in discussions with Powys County Council over matters such as community involvement in the future operation and management of Y Gaer is, at least to some extent, determined by the number of paid-up members that we have!

### **'Justice in Brecknock over the centuries: some reflections'**

We are delighted that Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd will be giving the 21st Sir John Lloyd Memorial Lecture in Theatr Brycheiniog, Brecon at 7.00pm on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> March. Lord Thomas served as the Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013 to 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017 and now chairs a new Commission on justice in Wales. A native of the little village of Cwmgiedd near Ystradgynlais, he is an excellent speaker who holds his Breconshire heritage dear.

As is normal with this event, tickets are free but they must be booked. Please make contact with the Theatre Box Office (01874611622) or [www.theatrbrycheiniog.co.uk](http://www.theatrbrycheiniog.co.uk) as soon as possible to secure your seat. Unless you call in person or send a stamped addressed envelope, the tickets will be held for collection on the night. If you secure tickets but find, in the event, that you cannot come, do please contact the Box Office to release the seat so that it can be taken by someone else. And may I also remind you that there will be a retiring collection in aid of our educational work.

We normally like to arrange a meal with the speaker after the lecture. This has usually been in the Theatr restaurant although last year we went to the Castle Hotel. Do please email or ring me if you would like to be informed of this year's arrangements.

### **Other forthcoming meetings of the Society**

Our President Glyn Mathias has arranged for a poetry evening in The Muse at 7.00pm on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February. Present at this event, which will be free, will be John Freeman, the winner of this year's Roland Mathias Prize for his book 'What possessed me' and the poetry judge Jonathan Edwards, himself a poet.

At 6.00pm on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> February, The Muse will be the venue for the talk, already advertised in your programme, by Dr Martin Crampin on the stained glass windows of Breconshire.

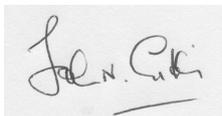
May I also remind you of this year's AGM which will take place at The Muse at 2.30 pm on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> April.

### **Programme from April 2018**

Our programme for the new Society year which begins in April is developing well. At this stage, we are keeping some flexibility to allow for special visits to the Museum once it has re-opened but we do have plans for one-day conferences in conjunction with local history societies in different parts of Breconshire.

The first will be on Saturday May 12<sup>th</sup> in conjunction with the Llangynidr Local History Society. The theme will be 'The Beaufort Estate in Breconshire: A Glimpse. It will include a talk by Dr Ann Benson entitled 'The Somersets, Dukes of Beaufort, in South Wales'.

The second will be on Saturday September 22<sup>nd</sup> and will be in conjunction with the Llangammarch Wells History Society. It will be called 'Notables of Llangammarch' and, among others, will feature John Penry 'The puritan firebrand' and Theophilus Jones, author of the famous work '*History of the County of Brecknock*'. Do note these dates in your diaries.



John Gibbs

### **Guidance on donations to the Conservation and Display Appeal**

The address of our web-site home page is given below. Click on 'Conservation & Display Project' for web page with details. These include (a) Prospectus for the Fundraising Appeal, (b) Donation Form, (c) Statement of Principles for the use of funds raised by the BS&MF under this appeal. All these are also downloadable as PDFs. There are also details of how donations can be made online via JustGiving.

Alternatively, anyone wishing to discuss making a donation can phone or email me (contact details overleaf) or Elizabeth Bickerton (01874 636926 or [liz.bickerton@btinternet.com](mailto:liz.bickerton@btinternet.com))