

Cymdeithas Brycheiniog a Chyfeillion yr Amgueddfa
Brecknock Society and Museum Friends
(Charity Number 518041)
Newsletter March 1 2017

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

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

Despite various unexpected problems (e.g. the discovery of asbestos in some residual concrete), work on the site is making good progress. We were recently very pleased to learn that the budget had been firmed up and the full contract signed. Dramatic visual changes can be expected in the next few weeks as new buildings start to rise. Our present expectation is that the Hub should be open by June 2018.

Enhancing the Visitor Experience. In order to get the core renovation and 'fit-out' underway, in what are exceptionally difficult times for local authorities, the main project costs were 'stripped to the bone' and the partners in the scheme (including of course ourselves) have taken up the challenge of seeking to raise funds for distinct and extremely important 'additional projects' which can be grouped together under the heading 'Enhancing the Visitor Experience'. There are some substantial requirements (for which we will be applying to major funding bodies) but there are also more modest items (extra display cases, work on the historic pillar-box in front of the museum) and it is for support for items such as these that I would like to appeal to members of the Society. If you feel that you can help with a donation (large or small) do please get in touch. A gift to the Society may well be eligible for Gift Aid which will increase the value of any sum significantly.

An Advance Notice about Membership Subscriptions.

It is very many years since the Society's membership fees were raised and, at £10 per household and £6 per individual member, they are very much below the figures for comparable societies. With funds bolstered by the money realised by the sale of the Old Museum in 2011, we have, using the interest that has been earned, been able to subsidise our activities. This situation will change once the funds are drawn down for the purpose for which they have been held: namely the refurbishment of the Museum & Art Gallery.

We set up a working group to advise on this matter, and they have come up with the recommendation that a new membership subscription of £20 per household (no individual rate) should apply from March 1st 2018. This recommendation, with the support of Council, will be put to the AGM in April. We do hope that you will feel that, with the refurbished Museum & Art Gallery due to reopen during that year, this will be a good time for you, our members to show your support for and confidence in all that we are seeking to do.

Annual General Meeting of the Society Monday April 3 2017

Please regard this letter as an invitation to the AGM which will be held at 2.30 pm at 'The Muse' The Old Museum, Glamorgan Street. More information will be sent out nearer the time but do please plan to come along to hear the latest information at this exciting time and to have your say.

A Poet's View of Henry Vaughan.

As you will know, our 20th Sir John Lloyd Lecture will be given by Dr Rowan Williams, the 104th Archbishop of Canterbury and now Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge. Rowan Williams has a long-standing interest in the work of the great Breconshire poet, Henry Vaughan, and we feel very privileged that he will be with us on Friday March 24th. (You should have already received an electronic flier about this but I attach it again for ease of reference).

May I remind you that unless you call in person or send a stamped addressed envelope, the tickets will be held for collection on or before the night. Seats are going rapidly and if you have tickets but find 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.

In previous years we have arranged for a meal after the lecture at the Theatr restaurant. This is currently closed and Elaine Starling has made arrangements for a post-lecture dinner (price for main course and pudding plus tea or coffee £19.50) in the Crug Room at the Castle Hotel. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Elaine and she will send you a menu (01874 711484 or evstarling@lineone.net). I am very much hoping that we will be able to sit down to the meal by 9.00pm. Please let Elaine know if you would like to come to this meal by Friday March 17th.

Programme from April 2017

Our programme for the new Society year which begins in April is developing well. At this stage I would like to draw your attention to two conferences that we are organising with various partners.

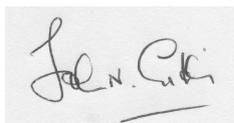
‘Window on the World - Travellers to and from Brecknockshire’ Saturday May 6

Some of you will remember that in the spring of 2015, we organised a one day conference on medieval poets in Breconshire; this in conjunction with the Centre for Welsh and Celtic Studies (CAWCS) and the University of Swansea. I am delighted to announce that we are now organising another conference in conjunction with CAWCS.

For this event we will be using the excellent conference facilities at Penpont, in its delightful location beside the Usk a few miles west of Brecon. From our end, the programme is being organised by Elizabeth Siberry and will involve an intriguing mixture of talks about people who were attracted to the special qualities of Breconshire and about those who travelled further afield. There will be a charge for the day: this will be £10 per person, but with a reduction to £8 for BS&MF members. Lunch will be available if booked in advance. (Those who receive information from us by email will already have received a two-sided poster about this event some 10 days ago – a summary of the programme is to be found at the end of this Newsletter).

‘Influences and Significance of Estates in the History of Breconshire’ Saturday Sept 9

This one day meeting will also be at Penpont and will be conducted in conjunction with the Institute for the Study of Welsh Estates (ISWE) at the University of Bangor. Again it will feature local speakers and visiting experts and I think I can promise a fascinating programme. I should make the point that this meeting will form our contribution to the Brecknock History Festival. The Festival, which will run throughout September, takes the place of the ‘Brecknock History Week’ of recent years. It is organised by the Brecknock History Forum, an informal grouping of all the organisations interested in the history of the historic county of Breconshire.



John Gibbs

Windows on the World: C18th & C19th travellers to and from Breconshire

9.45–10.20 *Registration and coffee*

10.20 Welcome by John Gibbs, Chair of the Brecknock Society

10.30 William Gibbs: Sir Richard Colt Hoare: fisherman, artist, diarist and antiquarian

11.00 Elizabeth Siberry: Sir William Ouseley of Crickhowell: travels to Persia and scholarly exchanges

11.45 Peter Wakelin: ‘That constant scene of action’: industrial tourism in Brecknock

12.15 Michael Freeman: Landladies, harpers and guides: providing services for tourists in Wales, 1770–1870

12.45 – 2pm Lunch and a chance to explore the exhibition and gardens (*lunch is available to buy on site – please book – or bring your own!*)

2.00 Mary-Ann Constantine: ‘The mosquito genus called tourists’: Theophilus Jones and Welsh responses to the ‘Welsh Tour’

2.30 Elizabeth Edwards: Curious travellers to Brecon and South Wales

3.00 Jonathan Williams: Tour journals and sketchbooks of the Penpont family

3.30 *Conclusion and tea*

To book a place and for more information, contact Angharad Elias: 01970 636543 or a.elias@cymru.ac.uk

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