

ISSUE 79

Feb 2023



## *Editorial*

Into another new year with lots of events to look forward to. Lets hope for a healthy year so that you can get along to many of them.

Hanes is published every 3 months. The next edition is to be published May 1st 2023. Please email any articles or information about events etc. with the heading "HANES" to alan.j.nicholls@btinternet.com by April 31st 2023.

## *Introducing The Forum*

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### **BRECKNOCK SOCIETY AND MUSEUM FRIENDS**

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### **BUILT WELLS & DISTRICT HERITAGE SOCIETY**

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**CUSOP HISTORY GROUP**

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**REGIMENTAL MUSEUM OF THE  
ROYAL WELSH**

Contact: Richard Davies / Celia Green  
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**TALGARTH AND DISTRICT  
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**YSTRADGYNLAIS DISTRICT HISTORY  
AND LANGUAGE SOCIETY**

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## NEWS AND EVENTS

### *Brecknock Society and Museum Friends*

#### **The Society's forthcoming programme of meetings - Jan 2023**

**Tuesday 14th February** (2.00pm Hay Castle) - Mari Fforde, Hay Castle Trust will be sharing more information about the Hay Castle project following the Society's visit in 2022

**Friday 17th March** (7.30pm Theatr Brycheiniog) - The Sir John Lloyd lecture by Dr Peter Wakelin speaking on 'Brecknock and Romanticism in British Art'. Admission free; tickets must be obtained beforehand from theatre box-office.

**Thursday 13th April** (*Time and location to be confirmed*) - Annual General Meeting

**Sunday 23th April** (3.00pm Llansantffraed Church) - Annual memorial evensong service for Breconshire poet Henry Vaughan and wreath laying at his grave. Address by Prof Jonathan Post, Department of English, University of California, Los Angeles

**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May** (*time and location to be confirmed*) - 'Breconshire saints in stained glass' Talk by Dr Martin Crampin, Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, Aberystwyth. His

new book *Welsh Saints and Welsh Churches* is due to be published in early 2023;

**Saturday 3rd June** - Visit to Caerwent Roman town near Chepstow, led by Dr Sian Rees, archaeologist and former CADW Inspector. Arrangements to be announced

**For further details please contact  
Elaine Starling program secretary**

**Sir John Lloyd Lecture** THEATR  
**ROMANTICISM IN BRITISH ART:  
THE VIEW FROM BRECONSHIRE**

J. M. W. Turner, Llanthony Abbey, 1834, courtesy of Indianapolis Museum of Art.

**Friday 17th March 2023  
7.30pm**

**This is a free ticketed event however booking is essential.**

This year's Sir John Lloyd Lecture is by Dr Peter Wakelin on the subject of Brecknock and Romanticism in British art. The Romantic movement developed new ways of experiencing the landscape from the eighteenth century, when among artists who responded creatively to places in Breconshire were J. M. W. Turner, John Sell Cotman and Thomas Jones. Artists associated with twentieth-century neo-romanticism also found inspiration in Brecon's natural, spiritual and industrial landscapes, including David Jones, John Piper, John Gorton and Bert Isaac, and the tradition can be seen to influence artists working in the county today.

Dr. Peter Wakelin, a writer and curator whose exhibition on David Jones at Capel yn Ffin will be shown at y Gaer in summer 2023.

For further information and to book tickets, please visit [brycheiniog.co.uk](http://brycheiniog.co.uk) or, contact our Box Office on 01874 611 622

[theatrbrycheiniog](https://www.instagram.com/theatrbrycheiniog) [TheatrB](https://www.facebook.com/TheatrB) [@Brycheiniog](https://twitter.com/Brycheiniog)

Theatr Brycheiniog, Canal Wharf, Brecon, Powys, LL3 7JW

#### **Sir John Lloyd Lecture 2023**

#### **Romanticism in British Art: the view from Breconshire**

I write on behalf of the Brecknock Society and Museum Friends (BSMF) to invite you to attend its 25<sup>th</sup> Sir John Lloyd memorial lecture, which will be

given by Dr. Peter Wakelin, at 7pm in the Theatre Brycheiniog, Brecon on Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023. Admission is free.

Dr. Wakelin is a writer and curator, who was formerly Secretary of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales and Director of Collections at the National Museum of Wales. His recent books include *Refuge and Renewal: Migration and British Art* and monographs on the artists Roger Cecil (the subject of course of an exhibition curated by Dr. Wakelin at y Gaer in Brecon); Sally Moore and Charles Burton. He is President of the Contemporary Art Society for Wales (CASW)

Dr. Wakelin will speak about Romanticism's innovative approaches to the landscape, starting in the eighteenth century when J. M. W. Turner, John Sell Cotman and Thomas Jones were among the artists who responded creatively to places in Breconshire. In the twentieth century, neo-romantic artists such as David Jones, Joseph Herman, John Piper, John Craxton and Bert Isaac, also found inspiration in Breconshire's natural, spiritual and industrial landscapes and the tradition continues to influence artists working in the county today.

Many of the artists Dr. Wakelin will mention are represented in the permanent collection of y Gaer in Brecon. An exhibition at y Gaer of the

works of David Jones during his residence at Capel y Ffin will open in July, curated by Dr. Wakelin, including loans from major institutions and private collections throughout the UK. This will run to October 2023, with an associated programme of events.

Tickets for Dr. Wakelin's lecture are free but must be booked via the Theatre box office-01874611622 or [www.brycheiniog.co.uk](http://www.brycheiniog.co.uk).

There will be a retiring collection in aid of BSMF's educational work.

We hope that you will be able to come on 17 March and please pass this information to any contacts who may be interested. I attach a poster in English and Welsh produced by Theatr Brycheiniog.

Elizabeth Siberry  
Chair BSMF

### **Cefn Brith and its links with the Brecknock Society**

John Gibbs  
(Former Chair of the BS&MF)

John Penry (1563-93), 'the Puritan Martyr', is one of Breconshire's most famous sons, with the farmhouse of Cefn Brith, near Llangammarch Wells in northwest Breconshire, generally considered to be his birthplace. In 1956 the Brecknock Society (as it was then known) marked the importance of the building by installing a plaque on the porch. In 2005, Professor

Gwynfor Jones gave the Sir John Lloyd lecture with the title 'John Penry – Puritan Firebrand' : the published version appeared in *Brycheiniog* in the same year (Jones 2005). Various images of the house can be found in James Ashdown's article on the legacy of John Penry in the most recent volume of *Brycheiniog* (Ashdown, 2022). I provided considerable editorial assistance to the author and, in particular, helped with provision of the illustrations and in providing an account of the links between the old farmhouse and the Brecknock Society. Cefn Brith was for a long period a tenanted farm, with the Williams family as the tenants for at least 150 years. In recent years, two Williams



Figure 1. Evan Thomas (left), John and Elizabeth Gibbs outside Cefn Brith in Aug 2019 with the Brecknock Society plaque on the porch behind them (picture Joy Thomas)

brothers, Edwin and John, farmed the land but in 2018 Edwin died and it was decided that the tenancy should be surrendered. In October 2018 there was a sale of the farm implements and furnishings. Gaynor, John's wife, is a local historian and she and her

husband hold some historic items, including the visitors book (illustrated in the James Ashdown article) and a remarkable collection of receipts for purchases made in the local shops; these going back many decades. The landowner, Evan Thomas, has since disposed of most of the land but has retained the house and farm buildings. My wife Elizabeth and I met him and his wife Joy on site in August 2019 (Figure 1) and they outlined their idea of adapting the house to residential use while retaining elements that would commemorate the link with John Penry. As it is Grade II\* this will involve much negotiation with CADW as well as other authorities (CADW listing attached as an Appendix.)

Then came the Covid epidemic and it was only a few weeks ago that I renewed my contacts with Evan. I have gathered that not much has happened to the buildings as yet, but we have been invited to meet him again in the spring and I am in hopes that a BS&MF visit can be arranged for later in the year.

### **Appendix on Features of Cefn Brith**

Grade II\* listed longhouse. The listing particulars of 1951 state: Farmhouse and buildings, whitewashed rubble stone with slate close-eaved roofs and ridge stacks each side of house range, stone left end stack, and larger square stone stack on ridge to right. One storey and attic. Three catslide dormers on the eaves with casement pairs, the left one with two casement

pairs. Ground floor has few openings: a board door to left, a small casement pair window, with timber lintels, then a big whitewashed stone gabled porch with timber lintel, and another casement pair window to right. Within porch, colour-washed walls, two stone bench seats and plank door with cambered head and wrought iron hinges. Heavy cambered-headed oak frame.

Byre to right is lofted with same eaves and ridge height. One centre right loft door over two doors with timber lintels, one to centre with lintel carried under loft door and over a small window, and one far right. Rear is not whitewashed, long rubble rear wall with loft door to byre. Various rear windows to house including a stair light.

Interior: Interior not inspected. The published plan shows a big fireplace with bread oven at the byre end, thin stairs in line with the door and a long space to left, with later partitions and small end fireplace. There are nine regularly-spaced beams.

Reasons for Listing: Included at higher grade for special historic interest as a well-preserved long-house of strong regional character and with historical associations as birthplace of John Penry.

The house is described by Stanley Jones and John Smith in their famous 'Buildings of Breconshire' series: Vol 1 The Builth District (Ref Brycheiniog Vol. 9)

'Mention must be made of one of the best-known farmhouses in the county, Cefn-brith, celebrated as the birthplace of John Penry (1563-93), the Puritan associated with the Marprelate Tracts. Although no part of the farm appears to go back to that time, the continuity of the long-house tradition is such that this building is certainly the lineal descendant of the house Penry lived in and stands in exactly the same spot. It has an anomalous plan (Figure 2) that is evidently the result of many modifications, starting, perhaps, from a hall in the position of the present kitchen, with a cross-passage, now suppressed, in the byre. Even if it then had inner-rooms the house must certainly have been extended, probably in the second half of the 18th century, to accommodate a large unheated room (dairy, pantry ?) and a parlour. It is unusual in any kind of long-house to find two axial fireplaces in view of the tendency to insert a tiny fireplace in a parlour formed in the front half of the house. The planning of Cefn-brith is very spacious by comparison with most of its fellows. The sketch indicated '18th C perhaps including earlier work'.

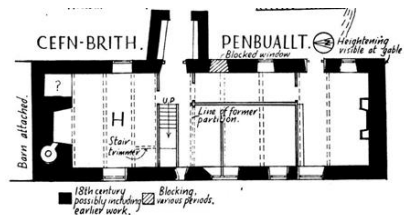


Figure 2. Plan of Cefn Brith as drawn by Stanley Jones.

## References

Ashdown, J. 2022. The legacy of John Penry, Pioneer of Dissent. *Brycheiniog* 43: 48-58.

Jones, J.G. 2005. John Penry: The early Brecknockshire Puritan Firebrand. *Brycheiniog* 37:23-43.

## Hay History Group

### Hay Castle Events

The following events are in the Clore Learning Space at Hay Castle.

**Wednesday 8 February 2023,  
6.30pm - Life on the Floodplain - Talk  
by Ceri Leigh - Cost: £5**

‘A year’s diary entry of the wildlife photographed in a garden on the Usk floodplain tells a bigger story of trauma, mental health and the power of nature to help heal the mind.’

The diary of one year in rural Wales, telling the story of the wildlife photographed in Ceri Leigh’s garden on the Usk floodplain, as well as a bigger story of trauma, mental health and the power of nature to help heal the mind.

Ceri Leigh was fascinated by wildlife as a child growing up in suburban Wales. She went on to study conservation and wildlife illustration before joining the Natural History Museum in London initially as a graphic designer. Meanwhile she gained her Masters degree in Science Communication from Imperial College London and finally had her dream job

of Exhibitions Manager (Design & Conservation). However, an accident on her way home from work one day, frightening in its sudden simplicity, resulted in severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This caused flashbacks, seizures and anxiety, which still significantly affect Ceri’s life.

Ceri moved back to Wales with her family and, as a coping mechanism, began photographing the surrounding landscapes and wildlife. She wrote brief notes every day about the wildlife in her garden, nestled between the mountains and the Usk floodplain. The result is this book and local exhibitions of her photographs.

**Saturday 11 February 2023, 10am -  
5.30pm - A Brief History of Money,  
Banking, Credit (Not Forgetting  
Crypto) - Tom Elliott & Paul  
Greatbatch. - Cost: £30**

### All Day Seminar

We all use it, we all need it, but what is money and where does it come from? Is money today the same as money in the past? Who does money serve and who controls it?

Based on their annual one-day course at King’s College London, Tom Elliott and Paul Greatbatch invite you to spend day pondering these questions, on a day-long journey over the centuries from Ancient Babylon to the Blockchain.

10:00 Welcome and introduction.  
10:05 What is money? Who invented it? Who creates it? - The role of banks. The role of governments. The role of illusion.  
11:30-11:45 Break  
11:45 Using money to make money - “The Price of Time” and how banks make profits (and losses).  
12:45 – 13:30 Lunch (not provided - please contact Hay Castle Café on 07546 345280 to book a table)  
13:30 The financial economy and the real economy - How money flows (or doesn't).  
14:30 The politics of banking - It's not the principle, it's the money.  
15:30-15:45 Break  
15:45 Crypto - A new excuse for an old-fashioned bubble?  
17:00 Questions, comments and discussion  
17:30 Close

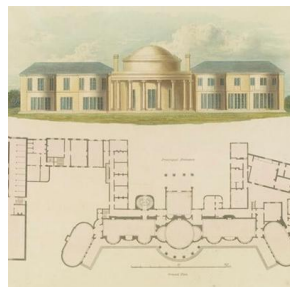
**Tom Elliott** is a senior investment strategist at Mattioli Woods, involved in asset allocation decisions in portfolios, and communicating the firm's view on global financial markets to clients. He is also a visiting lecturer at King's College (London University), in the Department of Political Economy, where he lectures on political economy and monetary economics. For 18 years, until 2013, Tom was at JP Morgan Asset Management, and from 2006 their Global Markets Strategist, leaving as an Executive Director. Tom has a Master's degree in Economic History from the London School of Economics,

and a degree in History from the University of Sussex.

**Paul Greatbatch** is an investment professional with over 40 years' experience, and an active investor in public and private markets. He is also a visiting lecturer at King's College (London University), in the Department of Political Economy, where he lectures on political economy and monetary economics. After specialising in US investment, Paul spent 5 years living in Hungary during the transition from a planned to a market economy. For 20 years, he was a partner of Genesis Investment Management, a specialist emerging-markets investment manager for large institutional clients. He has a degree in Economics from Cambridge University.

**Wednesday 22 February 2023, 6pm**

**Richard Suggett: John Nash - Architect, Welshman & Genius**  
**Cost: £7.50**



A talk by Royal Commission architectural historian, Richard Suggett on John Nash, Architect:



Welshman and Genius.

The talk explores Nash's transition in late eighteenth century Wales from obscure surveyor and carpenter to accomplished and innovative architect. The talk will be illustrated with drawings and colour and black and white photographs.

Born at Cardigan. He was apprenticed to Sir Robert Taylor and afterwards settled near Carmarthen. He was persuaded by a number of friends to start in business as an architect; this he did, becoming well-known almost at once. He designed the Cardiganshire county gaol at Cardigan, and the west front and the chapterhouse in St. Davids cathedral. He moved to London and became world-famous for his work on Regent's Park and the terraces adjoining it, Regent Street, and the Marble Arch.

**Wednesday 22 March 2023, 7pm - 8pm - Talk by Julie Brominicks: The Edge of Cymru: A Journey - Cost £7.50**

When Julie Brominicks embarked on her journey around the edge of Cymru by Wales Coast Path and Offa's Dyke Path in 2012, she intended her walk only to be a break between careers – between her job as a sustainability teacher at the Centre for Alternative Technology and her ambition to become a writer.

In reality her walk was the catalyst that led to more journeys. A quest to examine her identity as an English incomer. A subsequent research journey into Cymru's language and history. An environmental pilgrimage as she considers how we arrived at this state of environmental crisis – and how we can best respond.

What emerges in form of a book, is a homage – to Cymru, its past, present and potential future, and to its peoples, land, language and biodiversity.

Join Julie for an evening of journeying with particular relevance to Y Gelli - Hay, and its place on the edge of Cymru.

Julie Brominicks is author of *The Edge of Cymru* published by Seren Books, and is a frequent contributor to BBC Countryfile Magazine. She will be signing books after the talk.

## *Slanwrtyd District Heritage & Arts Centre*

The Heritage and Arts Centre will re-open for the 2023 Season on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March.

The Centre will be open through to October with the usual opening times of 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday every week. Also open on Bank Holidays.

Various local Artists will display a variety of items for sale on display, in the Upper and Lower Art Galleries,

some on display for a two week period but most for a month, these are changed on a regular basis. Artists and their specialities are listed on the Centre website as changes are made. We also have a small shop with interesting souvenirs and items for sale.

Each month a Talk is available on various items of interest, normally held on the first Wednesday of each month. The first talk this year will be held however on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February at 7.00 p.m.

### **Wednesday February 22<sup>nd</sup>:**

The History and Current Operations of the Heart of Wales Railway line. An illustrated talk with Tony Birdwood.

### **Wednesday March 8<sup>th</sup>:**

A visit to Dunkirk and Passchendaele. The Evacuation of Dunkirk. The Story of Hedd Wyn. Illustrated talk with Eifion Lloyd.

### **Wednesday April 5<sup>th</sup>:**

Lancaster bomber and other aircraft crashes in the locality, the Brecon Beacons, Black Mountains and the Eppynt. Illustrated talk with Jim Davies and Tony Egan.

All welcome. Entry £2.00, with refreshments.

### **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> March**

Coffee Morning with Welsh Cakes - from 10.00 a.m. to 12.00. All welcome £2.00.

## *Llyn Syfaddan History Group*

### **Blaenllyfni Castle**

The has been approached by CADW to help them free Blaenllyfni Castle from the clutching tendrils of brambles and shrubs and to dig an exploratory archaeological trench.

This hidden gem is regarded by CADW as one of the most important castles in the area and they are looking for volunteers to help with the work. A meeting is scheduled for 7pm on 16<sup>th</sup> March at Llangasty Village Hall to talk about the five year project and to recruit volunteers.

The ruins of Blaenllynfi Castle are tucked at the source of the River Llyfni near the junction of the roads from Brecon to Crickhowell and Bwlch to Llangors.

The castle is first heard of around 1215 but it seems probable that it, or an earlier wooden structure, was built upon the site of the former castle or fortress belonging to Huganus, Prince or the Lord of Brecknock.

According to early writings Huganus was defeated in battle by the Mercian Elfleda, or Ethalfleda, wife of Ethelred (Earl of Mercia), daughter of Alfred the Great and sister to the Saxon monarch, Edward.

Until around 1211 Blaenllynfi had formed part of the Lordship of Brecon, however in that year William De Braose, Lord of Brecon, was outlawed and his estates forfeited to the

Crown. King John then granted the new Lordship of Blaenllynfi to Peter Fitzherbert of Dene.

The Castle was then retaken in 1214 by Reginald and Giles (the sons of William De Braose) with the support of Llywelyn 1st and the Barons. But in 1217 Reginald was ordered by Henry III to again deliver to Peter Fitzherbert the Lordship of Blaenllynfi for exchange of certain lands in England. In the year 1233 Llywelyn 1<sup>st</sup>, Prince of Wales, attacked Blaenllynfi and according to Brut y Tywysogion or the Chronicle of the Princes, overthrew the castle and razed it to the ground although it was subsequently rebuilt or at least repaired.

By 1263, Reginald Fitzherbert of Talgarth and Blaenllynfi, Robert De Turberville of Crickhowell and Roger Pichard of Ystrad wy and others had “taken homage and fealty to Llywelyn Ap Gruffydd”.

In the year 1337 according to an inquisition made on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January of that year, the castle was in a very bad state of repair and although the defects in the building were set out fully it is not known whether any repairs were carried out.

Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, died on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1398 and according to the Inquisition Post Mortem taken following his death, he was stated to have died possessed of, inter alia, “the site of a certain castle now fallen down (or in bad repair) of Blaenllynfi”, so it would appear that the castle was in a state of almost complete ruin in 1398.

In the year 1459 the ruins of the

castle, manor and lordship of Blaenllynfi were forfeited to the Crown who retained them until on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1611 when James I granted them to Sir Richard Grobham and John Howe, since then they have remained in private hands.

## *Powys Archives*

Powys Archives are offering tours of the archives. Not only are we open to the public on Thursdays and Fridays between 9.30 and 17.00 (no appointment necessary) but we are now offering tours of the archives for groups on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. Tours must be booked in advance and are free, though we do ask for a donation.

Tours run between 10am – 1pm and 1.30pm to 16.30pm and consist of a welcome to the archive, a behind the scenes tour of our stores, refreshments, and the opportunity to consult archive materials in our search room (archives must be booked in advance). If you wish to view archive materials, we suggest the size of the tour is around 10 people but if you just solely wish to have a tour of the building, we could host c15-20 people. Further information about the archive can be found online at:

[www.storipowys.org.uk/archives](http://www.storipowys.org.uk/archives).

If you are interested in booking a tour, or have a general enquiry, please email us at: [archive@powys.gov.uk](mailto:archive@powys.gov.uk) or give us a ring on: 01597 826088.

## *y Gaer – Brecon Library & Brecknock Museum*

Talks at y Gaer - 2nd Saturday of the month at 11.30am

**11th February** - 'Love spoons' Talk by Keith 'Taff' Williams with examples from the Museum's collection and explanations of the techniques and symbols used in their making

**11th March** - 'Charles I in Brecon - A good night's sleep'. Talk by Sophie Clubb exploring the popular belief that the King spent a night in the Elizabethan bed now displayed in the Brecon Gallery

**15th April** (Note change of date)- 'Jack Clark - True Breconian'. Talk by Philip Clark using some of the Museum's archive of photos and films and Clark family photos of Brecon and surrounding area from the 1930s to '50s

**13th May** - 'The Schoolroom in Victorian Breconshire'. Talk by Glyn Mathias with links to the Museum's Victorian schoolroom

**10th June** - 'Portraits and busts in the Court Room'. Talk by William Gibbs about the artworks on permanent display in the Museum's Court Room

All talks are free to attend.  
For further details, contact Libby Rees  
libbyrees@gmail.com

## *Ystradgynlais District History and Language Society*

### **M.S. Visit to the Heritage Sites In Ystradgynlais**

Mr. James Evans MS for Breconshire & Radnor met with representatives of the Society in November 2022 to visit a number of the Society's project sites.



The Society has completed a large number of projects in the village since its formation in 2010 and acknowledges the financial support and encouragement it has received from members of the Ystradgynlais Town Council in the Society's endeavours to record the area's rich cultural and industrial heritage.

Mr Evans was accompanied by members of the Society Arwel Michael, John Owens, Andrew Broadbent along with Cllr Martin Donnelly, Chairman of the Town Council.

Sites visited included the location of a number Interpretation panels which outline the cultural and industrial heritage of Ystradgynlais and its satellite villages using photographs and bilingual text. The *Cofio'r Glowyr (Remembering the Miners)* Memorial at the Diamond Park, which was unveiled in 2014 by Mr Carwyn Jones AM, the then First Minister of Wales. Then onto the site of the Ynyscedwyn Ironworks regarded as the birthplace of the American Anthracite Iron Industry.

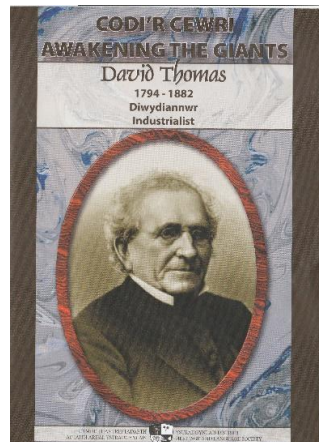
Next on the tour was the refurbished Daniel Protheroe Memorial Park in the Town centre completed in 2017 and the seating area around the Town's War Memorial in the Gorsedd Park. The latter project was completed as a joint project with the Ystradgynlais Branch of the Royal British Legion and Town Council in April 2019.

The brief tour concluded at the site of the Lidice Pear Tree, at Cwmgiedd which was presented to the Society by the members of the Lidice community in the Czech Republic to commemorate the filming of *'The Silent Village'*. The film commemorated the complete destruction of the village of Lidice and its population by the Nazi Regime in retaliation for the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich on 27th May 1942. The film produced and directed by Humphrey Jennings in 1943 was filmed in Cwmgiedd, The pear tree was one of eight saplings taken from

the only surviving feature of the Lidice massacre and was planted at Cwmgiedd in a special ceremony in 2015. by Pavla Nespor Bellisova, the grand-daughter of Anna Nesporova, one of the female survivors of the Lidice massacre who survived her incarceration in a Nazi concentration camp.

At the end of the visit Mr Evans thanked the members for their welcome and tour. He wished the Society every success for the future.

### Notable Persons of the Area



The fourteenth pamphlet in the Society's Notable Persons series outlining the life and work of notable persons who were either born in or lived in the Ystradgynlais area is now available free of charge from the Welfare Hall, Ystradgynlais and the Ystradgynlais Library. The pamphlet outlines the life and work of David Thomas who worked with George

Crane at the Ynisedwyn Ironworks to develop the process of using anthracite coal to smelt the ironstone. It was on 5th February 1837 that David Thomas succeeded in smelting iron ore with anthracite coal as the only fuel. In 1839 he was 'head-hunted' by Erskine Hazard of the Lehigh Crane Iron Company, USA. and the Thomas family emigrated to the USA. in April 1839. There he further developed the iron industry in the Pennsylvania area of the USA. His work was held in high esteem and he became known as 'the Father of the American anthracite iron industry.'

## *Brecknock Forum*

### **The Brecknock History Forum Minutes**

**Friday 27th January 2023**

**Sardis URC meeting room, Llangynidr**

1. Present. John Gibbs (Chair of Forum . BS&MF); Malcolm Best ( Secretary Ystragynlais Heritage Society); Bernard Illman ( Brecon & Monmouthshire Canal Trust); Julie Ellis, Rosemary Evans, Debbie Vuilliamy (Llangynidr local History Society) . Linda Kells ( Llangors History Group); Eliane Wigzell, Geoff Williams (Crickhowell & District Archive Centre); Alison Noble (BLFHS); Mike Williams (Cathedral, Military Museum and Editor Brycheiniog); Elaine Starling (Secretary of Forum; BS&MF, U3A).

2. Apologies : Sophie Houlton( BS&MF); Arwel Michael , John Owens (YHS). Sue & Mal Morrison (Builth); Sue & Simon Lilly (Llangammach Wells); Elizabeth Bingham (Llyswen); Alan Nicholls (Hanes and Hay); Rob Thomas (Llanwrtyd Wells); Amanda Rosewarne ( Military Museum); Kate Riddington, Nicola Farr (y Gaer); C. Ralph ( Crickhowell History Society).

3. Welcome. John thanked Llangynidr LHS for hosting the meeting and Rosemary Evans welcomed the group to Sardis Chapel. He welcomed Eliane Wigzell from Crickhowell Aechive Centre.

4) Brecknock History Festival.

a) Update re 2022 Sacred Places: The publication has been well received. Mike Williams was complimented on his introduction. Alison Noble estimates that the BLFHS are holding about £1000 as profit from the sale. At present, we still hold 350 unsold copies which will be distributed in the Spring to various Centres. Hay Festival gave The Forum £3.50 per copy , other centres £3. Crickhowell will sell during The Walking Festival. Spin off from this project : Llangors is producing its own booklet about the Churches and Chapels as they have research information that was not published. Sue Lilly , Llangammach Wells, had reported that St David's at Tirabad is to be repaired by The Church in Wales. It's use is to be passed over to the local community. This means that the Gwynne

Memorials are saved and the Chapel will be open to visitors.

b) 2023 topic for History Month.

A number of topics were canvassed at the last Committee meeting.

Members were asked to consider looking at Pubs and Inns in their locality. BLFHS have established that there were over 120 pubs in Brecon . Some were in front rooms of houses , malt houses etc . There are also temperance houses. Llangynidr had 8/9 pubs . Llangattock similar . Ystradgynlais had many.

It was agreed that this topic should be pursued as the theme for the 2023 Brecknock History Festival However it is recognised that certain groups will have their own priorities: Llangors would like to have an exhibition of local History at that time, while the Cathedral in September has a number of events in relation to the Centenary of St Mary's becoming a Cathedral.. There was discussion whether a printed edition of Hanes should be produced that covered the autumn events. A decision on the practicality of this will be taken at the next meeting, at which we would also consider whether we have a launch event for History Month. Alison will continue to try to contact Cadw for links with Open Doors – up until now her efforts have been unavailing.

5) News from y Gaer.

Kate Riddington, the new Curator, has taken up her post.

The Brecknock Arts Trust has supplied funding for the post of a 2-year part

time curator to help with the Art gallery programme. Gracie Price (currently a Hub Assistant) has been appointed to this role.

NPTC has signed the agreement with Powys for its use of various rooms and the Coffee shop is due to open but for restricted hours initially but..

The booking system for rooms has not been clarified. BLFHS is using Kensington Baptist Chapel for meetings, being unable to obtain the promised space in y Gaer. Thus there are still issues to resolve. In y Gaer, the BS&MF is arranging a series of short talks linked to items in the Museum & Art Gallery's collection at 11.30 am on the second Saturday of each month:

11th Feb, Love Spoons; 11th March, Charles 1st in Brecon (Sophie Houlton); 8th April, Jack Clark a true Breconian (Philip Clark) 13th May; The Victorian School Room (Glyn Mathias) BHF members are reminded that the Museum covers the whole of Breconshire: If anyone would like to give a talk in this series they are invited to contact Libby Rees ( [libbyrees@gmail.co](mailto:libbyrees@gmail.co) )

6) Hanes Alan Nicholls has sent out a reminder for items for the next edition; the deadline being 31st January.

7) Brycheiniog. Mike Williams spoke about the difficulty of getting articles in this year, a situation also experienced with other journals. Covid restrictions had denied potential authors writers access to

archives etc. As a result publication will be delayed until the 16th May. Mike also asked if any BHF members would like to do a book review. Two books were mentioned: one on Dick Penderyn and the other on the Burney brothers of Hay.

8) Sir John Lloyd Lecture 2023 17th March 7.30 Theatre Brycheiniog . Dr Peter Wakelin will speak on Romanticism in British Art, The View from Breconshire. Publicity material is being distributed. BHF members were asked to advertise the event using the letter and fliers that Elaine would be distributing electronically.

There is a link with a major exhibition in y Gaer later in the year (July to October) on the artist and poet David Jones who lived for a while at Capel-y-Ffin. Various events will be linked with this exhibition (more information in due course)

9) Cefn Brith.a grade 11\* Farm house in NW Breconshire: Birthplace of Puritan Martyr John Penry. John has written an article for Hanes and he would like to arrange a visit to this property.

10) Round the Groups.

a) BS&MF John Gibbs talked about a draft BBNP report on the characteristics of Farmsteads across the National Park. The BS&MF has given a grant to the Park to improve the document prior to its on-line publication .

Elaine outlined the Society programme:

14th February Hay Castle Revisited.

23rd April Henry Vaughan

Anniversary Commemoration

16th May Breconshire Saints in

Stained Glass. Dr Martin Crampin.

3rd June Visit to Caerwent led by Dr Sian Rees.

b) Llangyndir LHS.

May 16<sup>th</sup> AGM and talk by Mike

Williams on Brecon Cathedral

June 3<sup>rd</sup> Farmsteads in Llangyndir

Parish. Talks and site visits linked to

the BBNP publication mentioned

above

c) Ystradgynlais

Malcolm thanked Mike for his

presentation re Brecon Cathedral,

John Williams had given a talk on

Prehistoric Buildings in Wales and

Keith Noble on the wildlife in the

Brecon Area.

Discussions have been started with

local schools introducing them to

projects and sites developed in the

area including the diamond park

project and local Heritage sites -

aimed at Year 5 and 6

A 15th pamphlet in the series has

been published. This celebrates David

Thomas who worked in Ynyscedwyn

Iron works and developed a method

of using ato produce iron, He was

head hunted by the Americans and is

regarded as the father of the

American Iron and Steel industry.



The Society has been invited to link up with The Josef Herman Foundation in a function being held in the Senedd sometime in June. It is part of refugee week .

Arwel Michael will hold a Q&A with Ed Thomas who is also from Cwmgiedd , Ystragynlais and is well known for his film and TV work ( Hinterland and House of America etc)

d) BLFHS

Alison Noble described the programme that includes the following.:

John Webb's talk about shops In Crickhowell  
Tramways Talk  
The BBNP Heritage Partnership.  
Penpont House visit  
Postponed walk around Ystragynlais

e) Regimental Museum.

Mike Williams reported on the damage caused by the burst pipe and the fact that the Museum will be closed for some months. They are hoping to have a temporary exhibition later in the year

f) Cathedral

This is the Centenary year of the Museum.  
September is a very busy Month  
9th September Diocese Centenary Celebration At Royal Welsh Show ground  
14th September Brecon Cathedral Bellingring Peal 2-5pm  
16th Medieval Festival  
17th Centenary Service  
30th Caritas Choir Concert

e) Cambrian Archaeological Association weekend in Brecon 22nd - 24th September.

g )Builth Mike Williams will talk on the 12th May about Welsh Druids

h) Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal Trust Bernard Illman .

The Lord Raglan Canal boat based at Goytre is available for hire contact. (Glyn 01633 892167). Available for away days, Meetings, School visits and special occasions.

Regeneration is continuing. There is the possibility of a new water park at Cwmbran , Vortex generated locks. Discussion ensued about the historically-important local feeder that supplies water to the Canal in Llangyndir. John Gibbs suggested that he and Bernard should visit it together.

i) Llangors

Next Talk is from Mike Clavier on Pilgrimage.  
Before Covid struck Cadw had approached the Society for help with a restoration project at Blaen Llynfi Castle near Bwlch. Linda Kells produced two sheets that outlined the History (these will be attached in a separate PDF). There will be a meeting at Llangasty Hall on 16th March at 7.0 pm. It was suggested that there might be the possibility of an open Day in History Month in September. See also David Morgan's epaper.

j) Crickhowell & District Archive Centre (Geographically the centre covers the old Crickhowell Rural District Council)

Eliane Wigzell outlined the recent publications from the Centre: Crickhowell 1881, John Webb's book on the High Street. Current Work is on a book on the great Houses in the area. They are a valuable income-earners.

Revamped Friends Newsletters are produced twice a year (costs £10, subscribe on line) .

AOB Clive Ralph has reported that the Crickhowell History Group has found it difficult to recruit new members after Covid . It has decided to cease operation for a year. It was noted that the Crickhowell Archive Centre does not have the resources to take on the activities of this group.

Sue and Simon Lilly are stepping down from their role as BHF link with Llangammach Wells.

We thank them for their support and hope that a successor can be found .

A Purple plaque is being erected in Brecon in Memory of Francis Hoggan on Friday 3rd March . Please look for details in the press

Date of next meeting This was agreed to be at 10.30 Friday March 31<sup>st</sup>, a venue in Brecon to be determined. A brief discussion took place about having hybrid meetings using Zoom. The matter will be considered further: some venues are suitable, others not.