



Crickhowell and District History Society

Newsletter No. 19 ~ Summer 2019

The first half of our programme was overshadowed by the death of Sheila Harris. Her absence is still keenly felt by all of us and we continue to miss her enthusiasm and commitment to the Society and to local history.

Your Society has twenty six members including five who have joined this year and attendances at our talks have averaged eighteen. Please do what you can to encourage people to come along to our meetings.

I am pleased to report that we have a new Treasurer. Julian Gliddon who hails from Brecon and has been coming to our meetings for the last four years, has kindly agreed to take on the role.

Thank you for your continued support and we look forward to seeing you at our next talk on Wednesday 18 September when we will be entertained by Diane Thomas who will tell us about Kilpeck Church

Peter Games
Acting Chairman

Visit of Chepstow Archaeological Society

On Sunday 7 July we gave a guided tour of the town's main historical sites to nineteen members of Chepstow Archaeological Society. Although many said they had passed through Crickhowell few had spent any time here and they were favourably impressed by what the town has to offer. After our tour the group went to Nant y Ffin Cider Mill for lunch and spent the afternoon at Tretower Court.

Louis Hurley School History Prize

Unfortunately there will be no competition this year. It was the turn of Llangattock School to take part but they have told us they are unable to do so. Crickhowell Community Primary School will be participating next year.



*Just one of the many fascinating carvings at
Kilpeck Church*

Society's Talks for 2019

Our AGM and the first lecture of the year by our President Robin Williams was cancelled since it fell in the week of Sheila Harris' very moving funeral. The first talk of the year entitled 'Up Top, the History of the Mid Wales Hospital, Talgarth, was therefore given by Hugh Purcell and Margaret Percy both of whom had distinguished careers presenting BBC documentaries. They vividly described patients, their treatments and briefly, the use of the hospital by the military in the Second World War. The detail in their book suggests that a further lecture would be equally interesting.

The meeting in April was a change from the advertised programme since Dr Celyn Gurdin Williams was unable to make the date so, following a brief AGM, Dr Naylor Firth gave an extremely interesting talk on the Wye Valley industries. The amount and variety of these were amazing—from mining to transport together with shipbuilding in Chepstow.

May brought us the welcome return of Brian Davies describing 'The View from the Rocking Stone, Pontypridd'. This entertaining evening covered the geology of the Stone and the myriad gatherings taking place on and around it. In June William Gibbs gave a lecture entitled 'Seeing Landscape-how artists have recorded the landscape of Breconshire through time'. His beautifully illustrated and interesting talk showed how different artists depicted views in and around Brecon at different periods including those from the present day.

We look forward to Diana Thomas talking about the lovely twelfth century Kilpeck Church on 18 September, a film show by Phil Harrison of Crickhowell in World War 1 on 23 October and Dr Celyn Gurdin Williams talking about Lady Llanover and her circle on 20 November.

Dates for Your Diary

27 September 2019 marks the centenary of the death of the famous opera singer Dame Adelina Patti who lived in retirement at Craig y Nos Castle near Crai. On this date there will be a short musical performance at dusk and a commemorative ceremony at Craig y Nos. There are several other events organised including a Gala Concert with the soprano, Elin Manahan Thomas, at the Guildhall in Brecon at 7pm on Saturday 14 September and a celebration of Dame Adelina's life at Brecon Theatre on 21 September.

22 October 2019 An illustrated talk by John Webb and Ryland Wallace entitled 'Crickhowell High Street Across the Decades' in the Clarence Hall at 7pm. Tickets costing £10 may be obtained from Webbs or the Archive Centre.

20 March 2020, the Brecknock Society sponsors an annual lecture in memory of local historian Sir John Lloyd. The lecture next year at Brecon Theatre will be given by Dr David Robinson, an architectural historian with a special interest in the Middle Ages. His talk is on 'Tretower Castle'. Entrance is free and tickets can be obtained in advance from the theatre.

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